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Tompkins and Other Folks

STORIES OF THE HUDSON AND
THE ADIRONDACKS

BY
P. DEMING



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TOMPKINS.

THE was a small, wiry man, about forty years of age, with a bright young face, dark eyes, and iron-gray hair.

We were reclining in a field, under a clump of pines, on a height overlooking Lake Champlain. Near by were the dull-red brick buildings of the University of Vermont. Burlington, blooming with flowers and embowered in trees, sloped away below us. Beyond the town, the lake, a broad plain of liquid blue, slept in the June sunshine, and in the farther distance towered the picturesque Adirondacks.

“It is certainly true,” said Tompkins, turning upon his side so as to face me, and propping his head with his hand, while his elbow rested on the ground. “Don’t you remember,

I used to insist that they were peculiar, when we were here in college ? ”

I remembered it very distinctly, and so informed my old classmate.

“I always said,” he continued, “that I could not do my best in New England, because there is no sentiment in the atmosphere, and the people are so peculiar.”

“You have been living in Chicago ? ” I remarked inquiringly.

“That has been my residence ever since we were graduated ; that is, for about seventeen years,” he replied.

“You are in business there, I believe ? ” I questioned.

Tompkins admitted that he was, but did not name the particular line.

“Halloo ! ” he suddenly called out, rising to his feet, and looking toward the little brown road near us. I looked in the same direction, and saw a plainly dressed elderly couple on foot, apparently out for a walk. Tompkins went hastily toward them, helped the lady over the fence, the gentleman following, and a

moment later I was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Pember, of Chicago.

Tompkins gathered some large stones, pulled a board off the fence in rather a reckless manner, and fixed a seat for the couple where they could lean against a tree. When they were provided for, I reclined again, but Tompkins stood before us, talking and gesticulating.

"This," said he, "is the identical place, Mrs. Pember. Here you can see the beauties I have so often described. Before you are the town and the lake, and beyond them the mountains of Northern New York; and (if you will please to turn your head) that great blue wall behind you, twenty miles away, is composed of the highest mountains in Vermont. The mountains in front of you are the Adirondacks, and those behind you are the Green Mountains. You are at the central point of this magnificent Champlain Valley; and you are comfortably seated here beneath the shade, on this the loveliest day of summer. Dear friends, I congratulate you," and

Tompkins shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Pember.

“And there, Timothy,” observed the old gentleman, pointing at the University buildings with his cane, “is actually where you went to college.”

“It was in those memorable and classic halls, as my classmate here can testify,” replied Tompkins. “And here we roamed in ‘Academus’ sacred shade,’ and a good deal beyond it. We went fishing and boating during term time, and made long trips to the mountains in the vacations. In the mean time, this wonderful valley was photographed upon the white and spotless sensorium of my youthful soul.”

“Going, going, going !” cried Mrs. Pember, with a light, rippling laugh, glancing at me. “That is the way I stop Mr. Tompkins when he gets too flowery.”

Tompkins looked at me and reddened. “I own up,” he remarked, “I am an auctioneer in Chicago.”

I hastened to say that I felt sure he was a

good one, and added, in the kindest way I could, that I had just been wondering how he had become such a good talker.

"Is it a good deal of a come-down?" asked Tompkins, with a mixture of frankness and embarrassment.

I replied that the world was not what we had imagined in our college days, and that the calling of an auctioneer was honorable.

A general conversation followed, in the course of which it appeared that Tompkins had boarded at the home of the Pembers for several years. They evidently looked upon him almost as their own son. They were traveling with him during his summer rest.

"This is a queer world," observed Tompkins, dropping down beside me, and lying flat on his back, with his hands under his head. "I came to college from a back neighborhood over in York State, and up to the day I was graduated, and for a long time afterward, I thought I must be President of the United States, or a Presbyterian minister, or a great poet, or something remarkable, and here I am an auctioneer."

Occasional remarks were made by the rest of us for a while, but soon the talking was mainly done by Tompkins.

Said he, "Since I was graduated, I never was back here but once before, and that was four years ago next August. I was traveling this way then, and reached here Saturday evening. I was in the pork business at that time, as a clerk, and had to stop off here to see a man for the firm. I put up at the best hotel, feeling as comfortable and indifferent as I ever did in my life. There was not the shadow of an idea in my mind of what was going to happen. On Sunday morning I walked about town, and it began to come down on me."

"What, the town?" asked Mrs. Pember.

"No; the strangest and most unaccountable feeling I ever had in my life," answered Tompkins. "It was thirteen years since I had said good-by to college. It had long ago become apparent to me that the ideas with which I had graduated were visionary and impracticable. I comprehended that the college

professors were not the great men I had once thought them, and that a college president was merely a human being. I had been hardened by fighting my way, as a friendless young man has to do in a great city. As the confidential clerk of a large pork house in Chicago, I felt equal to the 'next man,' whoever he might be. If a professor had met me as I got off the cars here Saturday night, it would have been easy for me to snub him. But Sunday morning, as familiar objects began to appear in the course of my walk, the strange feeling of which I have spoken came over me. It was the feeling of old times. The white clouds, the blue lake, this wonderful scenery, thrilled me, and called back the college dreams."

As he spoke, my old classmate's voice trembled.

"You may remember that I used to like Horace and Virgil and Homer," he remarked, sitting up, crossing his feet tailor-fashion, and looking appealingly at me.

I replied, enthusiastically and truly, that he had been one of our best lovers of the poets.

"Well," continued Tompkins, "that Sunday morning those things began to come back to me. It was n't exactly delightful. My old ambition to do something great in the world awoke as if from a long sleep. As I prolonged my walk the old associations grew stronger. When I came near the college buildings it seemed as if I still belonged here. The hopes of an ideal career were before me as bright as ever. The grand things I was going to do, the volumes of poems and other writings by Tompkins, and his marvelous successes were as clear as day. In short, the whole thing was conjured up as if it were a picture, just as it used to be when I was a student in college, and it was too much for me."

Tompkins seemed to be getting a little hoarse, and his frank face was very serious.

"Timothy," suggested Mr. Pember, "may be you could tell us what that big rock is, out in the lake."

"Why, father, don't you remember? That is rock Dunder," said Mrs. Pember.

"I guess it is," said the old gentleman, musingly.

“Well,” resumed Tompkins, “as I was saying, on one side were Homer and Virgil and Horace and Tompkins, and on the other was pork. I cannot explain it, but somehow there it was. The two pictures, thirteen years apart, were brought so close together that they touched. It was something I do not pretend to understand. Managing to get by the college buildings, I came up to this spot where we are now. You will infer that my eyes watered badly, and to tell the truth they did. Of course it is all very well,” explained Tompkins, uncrossing his legs, turning upon his side, and propping his head on his hand again, — “of course it is all very well to rake down the college, and say *Alma Mater* does n’t amount to anything. The boys all do it, and they believe what they say for the first five or six years after they leave here. But we may as well understand that if we know how to slight the old lady, and don’t go to see her for a dozen years, she knows how to punish. She had me across her knee, that Sunday morning, in a way that I would have thought impossible. After an

hour I controlled myself, and went back to the hotel. I brushed my clothes, and started for church, with a lump in my throat all the while. My trim business suit did n't seem so neat and nobby as usual. The two pictures, the one of the poets and the other of pork, were in my mind. I shied along the sidewalk in a nervous condition, and reaching the church without being recognized managed to get a seat near the door. Could I believe my senses? I knew that I was changed, probably past all recognition, but around me I saw the faces of my Burlington friends exactly as they had been thirteen years before. I did not understand then, as I do now, that a young man in business in Chicago will become gray-headed in ten years, though he might have lived a quiet life in Vermont for quarter of a century, without changing a hair."

"It is the same with horses," suggested Mr. Pember. "Six years on a horse-car in New York about uses up an average horse, though he would have been good for fifteen years on a farm."

"Exactly," said Tompkins. "You can imagine how I felt that Sunday, with my hair half whitewashed."

"You know I always said you might have begun coloring your hair, Timothy," said Mrs. Pember kindly.

"Yes," replied Tompkins, with an uneasy glance at me; "but I did n't do it. There was one thing in the church there, that morning, that I shall never have a better chance to tell of, and I am going to tell it now, while you are here."

This last sentence was addressed to me, and my old classmate uttered the words with a gentleness and frankness that brought back my best recollections of him in our college days, when he was "little Tompkins," the warmest-hearted fellow in our class.

"Do you remember Lucy Cary?" he asked.

I replied that I did, very well indeed; and the picture of a youthful face, of Madonna-like beauty, came out with strange distinctness from the memories of the past, as I said it.

"Well, I saw Lucy there," continued Tomp-

kins, "singing in the choir in church, looking just as she did in the long-ago days when we used to serenade her. I am willing to tell you about it."

Tompkins said this in such a confiding manner that I instinctively moved toward him and took hold of his hand.

"All right, classmate," he said, sitting up, and looking me in the eyes in a peculiarly winning way that had won us all when he was in college.

"Why, boys!" exclaimed Mrs. Pember, with her light laugh.

Tompkins found a large stone, put it against a tree, and sat down on it, while I reclined at his feet. He said, —

"You have asked me, Mrs. Pember, very often, about the people up here, and now I will tell you about some of them. Do you notice that mountain away beyond the lake, in behind the others, so that you can see only the top, which is shaped like a pyramid? That is old Whiteface, and it is more than forty miles from here. It used to be understood that there

was nothing whatever over there except woods and rocks and bears and John Brown. But the truth is, right at the foot of the mountain, in the valley on this side, there is a little village called Wilmington, and it is the centre of the world. Lucy Cary and I were born there. It was not much of a village then, and it is about the same now. There was no church, and no store, and no hotel, in my time ; there were only half a dozen dwelling-houses, and a blacksmith shop, and a man who made shoes. Lucy lived in the house next to ours. Her father was the man who made shoes. Lucy and I picked berries and rambled about with Rover, the dog, from the time we were little. Of course you will naturally think there is something romantic coming, but there is not. We were just a couple of children playing together ; and we studied together as we grew older. They made a great deal of studying and schooling over there. They had almost as much respect for learning then in Wilmington as they have now among the White Mountains, where they will not allow any waiters at the hotels who cannot talk Greek.

"It was quite an affair when Lucy and I left Wilmington and came to Burlington. The departure of two inhabitants was a loss to the town. It was not equal to the Chicago fire, but it was an important event. I went to college, and Lucy came over the lake to work in a woolen factory. *There* is where she worked," pointing to the beautiful little village of Winoski, a mile away behind us, in the green valley of Onion River.

"And she had to work there for a living, while you went to college?" asked Mrs. Pember.

"That was it," said Tompkins. "We used to serenade her sometimes, with the rest; but she seemed to think it was not exactly the right thing for a poor factory girl, and so we gave it up. I used to see her occasionally, but somehow there grew up a distance between us."

"How was that?" inquired Mrs. Pember.

"Well, to tell the truth," answered Tompkins, "I think my college ideas had too much to do with it. I did not see it at the time, but it has come over me lately. When a young

chap gets his head full of new ideas, he is very likely to forget the old ones."

"You did not mean to do wrong, I am sure," said Mrs. Pember.

"The excuse I have," continued Tompkins, "is that I had to work and scrimp and suffer so myself, to get along and pay my way, that I hardly thought of anything except my studies and how to meet my expenses. Then there was that dream of doing some great thing in the world. I taught the district school in Wilmington three months during my Sophomore year to get money to go on with, and I think that helped to make me ambitious. It was the sincere conviction of the neighborhood over there that I would be president of the college or of the United States. I do not think they would have conceded that there was much difference in the two positions. I felt that I would be disgraced if I did not meet their expectations. By one of those coincidences which seemed to follow our fortunes, Lucy made a long visit home when I was teaching in Wilmington. She was one of my pupils. She was

a quiet little lady, and hardly spoke a loud word, that I remember, all winter."

"Did you try to talk to her, Timothy?" asked Mrs. Pember.

"I do not claim that I did," answered Tompkins. "I was studying hard to keep up with my class, and that was the reason. But I wish I had paid more attention to Lucy Cary that winter. I would not have you think there was anything particular between Lucy and me. It was not that."

"We will think just what we please," interrupted Mrs. Pember, in a serious tone.

"Well," continued the narrator, "it would be absurd to suppose there was any such thing."

There was a long pause. "You had better tell the rest of the story, Timothy," said the old gentleman, persuasively.

"Yes, I will," responded Tompkins. "After I came back to college I got along better than before I had taught. The money I received for teaching helped me, and another thing aided me. The folks in Wilmington found out how a poor young man works to get through

college. Some of us used to live on a dollar a week apiece, and board ourselves in our rooms, down there in the buildings; and we were doing the hardest kind of studying at the same time. We would often club together, one doing the cooking for five or six. The cook would get off without paying. It was one of the most delightful things in the world to see a tall young man in a calico dressing-gown come out on the green, where we would be playing football, and make the motions of beating an imaginary gong for dinner. In order to appreciate it, you need to work hard and play hard and live on the slimmest kind of New England fare. But there is one thing even better than that. To experience the most exquisite delight ever known by a Burlington student, you ought to have an uncle Jason. While I was teaching in Wilmington, my uncle Jason, from North Elba, which was close by, came there. When he found out what an important man I was, and how I was fighting my way, he sympathized wonderfully. He was not on good terms at our house, but he called at my school, and

almost cried over me. He was not a man of much learning, but he looked upon those who were educated as a superior order of beings. I was regarded in the neighborhood as a sort of martyr to science, a genius who was working himself to death. I was the only public man ever produced by the settlement up to that date. It was part of the religion of the place to look upon me as something unusual, and uncle Jason shared the general feeling. I could see, as he sat there in the school-house observing the school, that he was very proud of me. Before leaving, he called me into the entry and gave me a two-dollar bill. It was generous, for he was a poor man, and had his wife and children to support. It brought the tears to my eyes when he handed me the money, and told me I was the flower of the family and the pride of the settlement. I felt as if I would rather die than fail of fulfilling the expectations of my friends. There was great delight in it, and it was an inexpressible joy to know that my relatives and the neighbors cared so much for me.

“To comprehend this thing fully, Mrs. Pember, you ought to be in college, and when you are getting hard up, and see no way but to leave, get letters, as I did from uncle Jason, with five or six dollars at a time in them. Such a trifle would carry you through to the end of the term, and save your standing in the class. If you were a Burlington college boy, while you might be willing to depart this life in an honorable manner, you would not be willing to lose your mark and standing as a student. You would regard the consequences of such a disaster as very damaging to your character, and certain to remain with you forever.

“I may as well say, while it is on my mind, that I *do* think this matter of education is a little overdone in this part of the country. A young man is not the centre of the universe merely because he is a college student, or a graduate, and it is not worth while to scare him with any such idea. The only way he can meet the expectation of his friends, under such circumstances, is to get run over accidentally by the cars. That completes his martyrdom,

and affords his folks an opportunity to boast of what he would have been if he had lived."

"Tell us more about Lucy," said Mrs. Pember.

✓ "Yes, certainly," replied Tompkins. "Lucy had a wonderful idea of poetry and writing. It is really alarming to a stranger to see the feeling there is up here in that way. The impression prevails generally that a writer is superior to all other people on earth. I remember to have heard that one of our class, a year after we were graduated, started a newspaper back here about ten miles, on the bank of the Onion River. He might just as well have started it under a sage bush out on the alkali plains. He gave it some queer Greek name, and I heard that the publication was first semi-weekly, then weekly, and then very weakly indeed, until it came to a full stop at the end of six months. It would have been ridiculous anywhere else; but being an attempt at literature, I suppose it was looked upon here as respectable."

"And did you use to write poetry?" queried Mrs. Pember.

“Not to any dangerous extent,” replied Tompkins. “I do not deny that I tried while in college, but I reformed when I went West. I think uncle Jason always had an idea that it might be better for me to be Daniel Webster. He stood by me after I left college, and for three years I continued to get those letters, with five or six dollars at a time in them. They kept me from actual suffering sometimes, before I got down off my stilts, and went to work, like an honest man, in the pork business.”

“I thought you were going to tell us something about that girl,” suggested Mrs. Pember.

“Yes, I was,” rejoined Tompkins. “When I saw Lucy here, four years ago, in the gallery with the singers, I felt as if it would be impossible for me to face her and talk with her. She would not have known me, for one thing. When I was a brown-haired boy, making poetry and being a martyr, and doing serenading, and living on codfish and crackers and soup, I could meet Lucy with a grand air that made her shudder ; but, as I sat there in church, gray and worn, I dreaded to catch her

eye, or have her see me. Although there was not three years' difference in our ages, yet it seemed to me that I was very old, while she was still blooming. Then there was the feeling that I had not become a great poet, or orator, or anything really worth while. On the contrary, I was just nobody. It seemed like attending my own funeral. I felt disgraced. Of course it was not all true. I had been a good, square, honest, hard-working man."

"Yes, you had indeed, Timothy," assented Mrs. Pember, with an emphatic nod.

"Yes indeed, I had," repeated Tompkins, his chin quivering. "It was not the thing for a fair-minded man to think so poorly of himself; but I was alone, and the old associations and the solemn services were very impressive. There was Lucy in the choir; she always could sing like a nightingale. When I heard her voice again, it overcame me. I did not hear much of the sermon. I think it was something about temptation and the suggestions of the evil one; but I am not sure, for

I had my head down on the back of the pew in front of me most of the time. I had to fight desperately to control my feelings. One minute I would think that as soon as the services closed I would rush around and shake hands with my old acquaintances, and the next minute would be doing my best to swallow the lump in my throat. It was as tough a sixty minutes as I ever passed. But finally the services were ended. I felt that it was plainly my duty to stop in the porch and claim the recognition of my friends. I did pause, and try for a few seconds to collect myself; but the lump grew bigger and choked me, while the tears *would* flow. Besides that, as the adversary just then, in the meanest possible manner, suggested to my soul, there was that pork. I knew I would have to tell of it if I stopped. But I did not stop; I retreated. When I reached my room in the hotel I felt a longing to get out of town. Fortunately, I could not leave on Sunday. So in the afternoon I sat with the landlord on his broad front platform, or piazza. It was not the person

who keeps the place now, but one of the oldest inhabitants, who knew all about the Burlington people. He guessed that I was a college boy; he thought he remembered something about my appearance. I did not mind talking freely with a landlord, for hotels and boarding-houses had been my home in Chicago. I had always been a single man, just as I am to this day. This landlord was a good-hearted old chap, and it was pleasant to talk with him. While we were sitting there, who should come along the street but Lucy, with a book in her hand. She was on the opposite sidewalk, and did not look up. She would not look at a hotel on Sunday. I asked the landlord about her, and he told me all there was to tell. She was living in one end of a little wooden cottage over toward Winooski, another factory woman occupying the other part of the house. They made a home together. The landlord said Lucy was an excellent woman, and might have married one of the overseers in the factory any time she chose for years back, but that she preferred a single life.

“When I got back to Chicago I kept thinking about Lucy Cary. The old times when we used to live in Wilmington came back to my mind. The truth of it was, I was getting along a little, at last, in Chicago in the way of property, and I found myself all the while planning how I could have Lucy Cary near me.”

“Did you want to marry her, Timothy?” inquired Mrs. Pember.

“It was not that,” he replied; “but I wanted to become acquainted with her again. I knew she was the best girl I had ever seen. She always was just as good and pious as anybody could be. We were like brother and sister, almost, when young; and when I thought of home and my folks and old Wilmington and the college days, somehow Lucy was the centre of it all. In fact, almost everything else was gone. My folks were scattered, and Lucy and uncle Jason were nearly the only persons up this way that I could lay claim to. There is a kind of lonesome streak comes over a man when he has

been grinding away in a great city for a good many years, and comes back to the old places, and sees them so fresh and green and quiet, and he can't get over it. He will cling to anything that belongs to old times. I was strongly influenced to write to Lucy, but finally I did not. I determined that I would get all I could for two or three years, and then I would come here and face things. I would get something comfortable, and would have a place I could call my own in Chicago. Then, when I had it fixed, I would come and see uncle Jason and Lucy, and stand the racket. Of course it was nonsense to feel shy, but it seemed to me that I could not say a word until I had something to brag of. They knew, in a general kind of way, that I was in Chicago, dealing in pork, or doing auctioneering or something, and that was as much humiliation as I could endure. To be sure, it was nothing to be ashamed of, for I had been an honest, faithful man ; but to come back to my friends empty-handed, without money or fame, and gray-headed at that, was more than I

could stand. If I had *had* anything or *been* anything, just to take the edge off, I could have managed it. As it was, I looked ahead and worked. If any man in Chicago has tried and planned and toiled during the last three years, I am that man. There has been a picture before my mind of a pleasant home there."

"And have you calculated to marry Lucy Cary?" inquired Mrs. Pember, in an eager voice.

"Perhaps it was not just in that way I thought of it," replied the narrator, very seriously. "You know I told you that the landlord said she preferred a single life."

"Timothy Tompkins," exclaimed the old lady apprehensively, "don't deny it,—don't! Think how dreadfully you will feel if you know you have told a lie!"

"It is nothing to be ashamed of, Timothy," said Mr. Pember, in a kind and sympathetic voice.

"If you put it in that way," answered my old classmate, in strangely mournful tones,

"all I can say is, there was never anything between us, — nothing at all."

"And did you come here this time to see her?" inquired Mrs. Pember, almost starting from her seat, and with the thrill of a sudden guess in her voice.

"I suppose it was as much that as anything," replied Tompkins doggedly, looking down, and poking with a short stick in the ground at his feet.

"And that is what has made you act so queer," mused Mrs. Pember. "Have you seen her?"

"Let *him* tell the story, Caroline," urged the old gentleman peevishly.

Tompkins looked gloomily out upon the lake and the broad landscape for a few moments; and then, resuming his narrative, said, —

"As I was saying, I have worked hard, and have got a nice little pile. I am worth thirty-five thousand dollars. When I made up my mind to come East this summer, the money to pay uncle Jason for what he had done was all ready. It made me choke to think how long

I had let it run. I figured it up as near as I could, — the two hundred that came to me in college, and the two hundred after that ; and I put in the simple interest at seven per cent., according to the York State law, which brought the sum total up to nearly nine hundred ; and to fix it all right I made it an even thousand dollars. Then I bought a new buckskin bag, and went to a bank in Chicago and got the money all in gold. I knew that would please uncle Jason. He once talked of going to California to dig. I suppose he had never seen a pile of the real yellow coin in his life. I wrote to him that I was to be in Burlington, and that I would be ever so glad if he would come over and see me. I met him yesterday afternoon, as he got off the boat, down at the steamboat landing. He knew me, and I knew him, although we were both changed a good deal. After we had talked a little, and got used to each other, I took him up to my room in the hotel. I was in a hurry to get at the business part of my visit with him first ; for it seemed to me that it would be better to let him see, to

begin with, that I was not exactly poor, nor such an ungrateful cub as may be he had thought I was. It was my resolve that before we talked of anything else I would get that money off my conscience. I knew that then I could hold up my head, and discuss our neighborhood and old times, and it would be plain sailing for me. I had pictured to my mind a dozen times how uncle Jason would look with that new yellow buckskin bag crammed with gold on his knee, steadying it with his hand and talking to me. So when I got him up to my room, and seated him in a chair, I began the performance. I got red in the face, and spluttered, and flourished round with the bag and the gold; and, to tell the truth, I fully expected to make the old man's hair rise right up. But it did not work. He got shaky and trembled, and somehow did not seem to want the money at all, and finally owned how it was. He said that he had never given me a cent; it was all Lucy Cary's doing. And she had made him promise, on his everlasting Bible oath, as he called it, that he would not tell. She had

put him up to the whole thing ; even that first two-dollar bill had come from her wages."

My old classmate ceased speaking. He was becoming flushed and excited. He gazed abstractedly at the broad blue mirror of old Champlain, upon which he and I had looked together so often in the days of our youth.

Mr. Pember sat silently. Mrs. Pember was whimpering behind her handkerchief.

I ventured the inquiry, "Have you seen Lucy yet?"

Tompkins' face quivered ; he was silent.

Mrs. Pember's interest in the question restored her. "Tell us, have you seen her?" she asked.

"I heard of it yesterday," Tompkins replied huskily, with an effort.

"Why, Timothy, what is the matter?" cried Mrs. Pember, rising from her seat and coming to him, as he bent his head and buried his face in his hands. The motherly woman took off his soft hat, and stroking his hair said, "You had better tell ; it will do you good." And then she put his hat on again, and stood wiping

her eyes in sympathy, while he struggled with himself.

The storm of feeling passed away, and Tompkins, having gained control of his emotions, slowly lifted his face from his hands, and sat peering out under his hat brim, looking apparently at a boat upon the lake. At last he said in a calm voice, "She is dead."

It was very still after this announcement. The softest breath of June scarcely whispered in the pines overhead, and the vast landscape below seemed strangely at rest in the fervid brightness of the summer noon.

My old classmate was the first to break the silence.

"Well," said he wearily, "it must be about time for dinner; let us go to the hotel."

We took the little brown road, and walked down a long, shaded, quiet street. Memories of college days and romantic summer nights, with music and starlight, and the long, long thoughts of youth came back to me, as I looked at the houses and gardens familiar in college days, and chatted about them with Mrs. Pember.

“Timothy always means well,” said she to me confidentially, reverting to the subject of which we were all thinking, “but it was very wrong for him to neglect that poor factory girl ; don’t you think so ? ”



RUBE JONES.

THE was a fine, large man, with wavy white hair and blue eyes. I thought I had never seen a better specimen of genuine white oak. It was a winter evening in January, 1864, and we were at widow Morgan's in Chapel Street, Albany. Jones and I were the only boarders. We were sitting with Mrs. Morgan in the cosy front parlor, before an open-grate fire.

"Fact is," said Jones, continuing the conversation, "this is not my first visit to Albany. I was here when I was eighteen years old ; I came then from my home in New Hampshire to find work. They were building the Capitol (which you now call the old Capitol, because you talk of having a new one), and I worked on the building. I do not mind telling you that some things happened to me that year in

this city which I have never felt quite right about, and I came here three weeks ago to look at the old landmarks and review my youth, as you may say. Of course you two have wondered what I have been looking about Albany for, and perhaps it will be as well for me to tell you all about it."

"We do not urge it," said Mrs. Morgan.

"Well, have it that I am anxious to tell, if you want to," said the narrator sharply. "Fact is, it was my first experience away from home, when I came here, so long ago. Albany was just a neat, queer Dutch place then. The houses were for all the world like those sharp old wooden hen-coops we had in New Hampshire. When I got my first sight of the place, that comparison occurred to me. And all around, on the sandy hills and in the hollows, were pine-trees and wild-briars and evergreens. And this beautiful verdure was profusely bespangled with the wild rose."

"Please don't get flowery, Mr. Jones," said Mrs. Morgan softly, with a slow, delicious utterance.

"I will try to avoid it, by special request," replied Mr. Jones; "but I wish both of you to understand how fine it was. All along the river were stately elms and lines of willows, and there was the greenest grass in the world. There were no railroads, or excavations, or dumping grounds, or decayed cabbages on the island, or dead cats in the river. Everything was just as neat and smooth and pretty as a picture on an old fashioned piece of china ware.

"Well, the way all this comes in," continued Jones, "is this. It was a wonderfully good place for a young fellow to go wandering around with his girl. And days when I was off work I used to wander; and evenings too, for that matter. It is just impossible to tell you of the delightful hours I enjoyed with little Blandie, the girl I cared so much for, and the dear little creature who I am sure cared for me."

"Mr. Jones," said Mrs. Morgan, with a mischievous smile, "if you are going to be sentimental, I cannot give my time to it; really, I cannot." And Mrs. Morgan took her work from her lap and resumed her needle.

“Go on with your sewing, madam,” said Mr. Jones tartly. “I will try not to disturb you. As I was saying, sir, when the lady interrupted,” he went on, turning to me, “my enjoyment of that spring and summer was beyond what I can explain. I doubt not that at your age you will comprehend something of it” (with a deprecating glance toward Mrs. Morgan, as if she were too old to understand). “It was the golden summer, the culmination of my life. But there came a cloud. In those days it required about a week to travel from New York to Albany. The man who had seen New York had something to boast of, and any New Yorker was a person of distinction, when he came to this city. In July, two men came here from New York. One of them won, or seemed to win, little Blandie away from me. It was not the older one, whose name was Dudley, but it was the young fellow, Harry. I was just a poor working-lad, but Harry was a gentleman from New York; what could I do? It may be that you, my dear young friend, have never passed through what I suffered, and I hope you

never have and never will. It just hurt me deep down in my heart, One thing about it was, I could not blame Blandie much. She was always so good, and so kind, and so yielding! Very likely it was her mother, more than it was Blandie, who encouraged him. We had not been engaged, although I knew I would have died for her," said Jones huskily, with
✓ tears in his eyes and his handsome face flushed.

Mrs. Morgan stopped sewing, and looked at the narrator.

"Well," continued the story-teller, "the short of it was, I could do nothing. If I do say it, the honest heart of a poor country boy had been cruelly wounded. It was hard getting through the days, when I felt the life going out of me, as if the blood were oozing, drip, drip, drip, from the wound in my heart. I resolved to leave Albany. My old home among the Granite Hills had been broken up, and I had only the wide world before me. I determined to go to New York. Two days before I started, I sent a boy with a polite little letter to Blandie's house, saying I was going away, and bidding

her good-by. She knew where I boarded, and I hoped she might send me a good-by, too, but she never did. I have always thought her mother kept my letter from Blandie. However it was, on a day in August I got on board a sloop leaving Albany, and started to work my passage to New York, feeling more dreadfully sad and lonely than can be told."

"And did n't you hear from Blandie?" inquired Mrs. Morgan, with eager interest.

"Not a word, madam," replied Mr. Jones, — "not a single word. And the three or four days following my departure from this city were the most miserable I ever experienced. I tried to blame the dear girl, but couldn't, not to amount to anything; and then I tried to blame myself. The wonders of the Hudson River and the great world into which I was going, and about which I felt dreadfully frightened whenever I thought of it, helped to lift her off my heart a little, as we sailed down the stream.

"Let me see," continued Mr. Jones, reflecting. "We started from Albany on Thursday,

and it was on the Monday night following that we got the great scare. We were just about entering the Highlands, and it was near eleven o'clock at night. There was a little breeze directly down the river. Suddenly there came around the bend in the stream, just below us, something so terrible that we were all nearly scared to death, as you may say. You may have read, Mrs. Morgan, of the strange spectres in the form of ships, that sailors tell of, which haunt the seas. This was one of those spectre ships. It was, however, much more terrible and substantial than you can imagine. It came right on, against the wind, as no vessel could sail, and its glare was unearthly. I shall never forget how our captain looked in that strange light, as he stood, ghastly and trembling, facing it. We fell upon our knees in supplication, as it passed us; and with a terrible roaring sound it moved away up the river. It was, in fact, madam," said Mr. Jones, with great emphasis, turning toward the lady as he spoke, — "it was, in fact, Fulton's steamboat on that first trip up the river, in August, 1807."

"Oh, Mr. Jones, why did n't you tell it that way first, and not try to make me nervous?" said Mrs. Morgan.

"I only told it just as it was," replied Jones curtly. "Fact is, we knew nothing about such a thing as a steamboat; had n't even imagined there could be such a thing. I venture to say there were not ten people along the Hudson River who had ever even heard of a steam-engine. I know, when we got to New York, the commonest inquiry was how the vapor could possibly make the wheels go round. We had never known of anything of the sort, and thought the steam was turned on loose some way, like the water on a water-wheel."

"We don't care so much about the steamboat," interrupted Mrs. Morgan, "but tell us more about Blandie."

"Oh yes, certainly," responded Mr. Jones politely. "Fact is, I have always thought, to look at it from a critical point of view, that the big scare helped me about Blandie. It shook me up so that I could think of something besides the dear girl, and so it gave a chance

for the hurt I had suffered to heal. The short of it was, I went to Bermuda soon after arriving in New York, and I remained on the island. It is a curious old place, as you know, where the people are more than half blacks, and the rest of them more dead than alive. But I stayed there, working hard, raising onions and potatoes. There was nothing to rouse me. It was just a quiet, dreamy climate. We do not have frost or snow there. The Gulf Stream keeps us warm all the year round. One day is just like another, and so it makes no difference whether you stay there a week or fifty years: it is one long dreamy blur, as you remember it. Now and then a shipwreck on the reefs or some political disturbance helps a little to mark off the time. But for the most part you have only the boom of the ocean, the buzz of the mosquito, the prospect of the potato crop, and the smell of the onion. Fact is," said Jones putting his hands in his pockets and tilting back his chair, "I have got to be pretty well off."

"And did you not hear from Blandie?" asked Mrs. Morgan.

“There is a circumstance about that which I have not related. I received a newspaper, saying that Blandie was married. It was an Albany paper, a very small, dingy sheet in those days, but quite large enough to settle my business. Somebody had marked the place in it for me to see. My little Blandie was married; and whom do you guess it was to?”

“Was it not to Harry?” I inquired.

“No,” was the reply; “it was to the older man of the two New Yorkers, — Mr. Charles E. Dudley. It was not to Harry. Now you know who Blandie was. Of course I can’t tell you Albany folks anything new about Mrs. Blandina Dudley. You know that she founded your Dudley Observatory, and that she did an amazing amount of good, before she died, with her large property. But the fact that Blandie married well did n’t help me a great deal, in that long ago time when I got the newspaper from the post-office in Bermuda. My view of the world was simply to the effect that I was done for, flattened out and finished.

“However,” resumed Mr. Jones, after a long

pause, taking his hands to lift one leg over the other, "I gradually picked up, found I was still available for some minor purposes, and traveled on. That is, I stayed at Bermuda."

"And did you ever see Blandie again?" asked Mrs. Morgan.

"Well, no," said Jones, "I did n't; but I studied her up, as you may say. Fact is, I got over my conniption, and was able to look at an Albany newspaper again, after a few years. As the potato crop came in good, I began to take the New York and Albany newspapers. That was a matter of a dozen years or so after Blandie was married. You would be really pleased, Mrs. Morgan, I dare say, to see what a kind of museum I managed to work up out of the things I found in the newspapers about the husband, Mr. Dudley, and, after his death, about the Observatory and Blandie. When the Observatory was inaugurated, or dedicated, I had the proceedings in the papers. I saved Edward Everett's great speech, and what the others said. And I followed up the goings-on afterward, about getting the instruments and making the

observations. That performance Professor Gould, the astronomer in charge, went through, in fighting your Albany trustees, who wanted to boss him, was better than any play. Then when Professor Peters, who was the astronomer under Gould, found a comet which was flirting around among the stars, it gave the Observatory a start, — set them up in business, as it were. Perhaps you were as much interested as I was in the fun they had trying to name that comet, just for all the world as if a child had been born. They talked at first of naming it after one of the trustees, a real good, solid man, who had been liberal in giving money to buy the instruments. But then the scientific fellows took fire, and wanted it named after one of them. They said that such a thing as naming a comet after a business man was never heard of, and that it would not do at all. Well, there was pulling and hauling and jealousy among the relatives, so to speak. If that comet had really been a child, I think the father and mother would have hitched on to it a string of names that would have made it necessary to

keep a catalogue of them, or to get out a second volume to the directory. The parents would have had to do it, to keep the uncles from becoming enemies and killing each other or murdering the child.

“And now, there was just one point those selfish creatures never thought of. Why on earth did n’t they do the right thing, and name that comet Blandie? She had given more money to the Observatory than all the rest put together. Her husband was dead; she was a lone woman; she never had any children, and here was a chance for a kind of heavenly offspring, as it were, which she would have appreciated. I was so riled up on the subject at the time that I sent a letter to the editor of a newspaper here about it. But he did n’t print it, and I don’t know whether he got it or not. Blandie would be too timid to speak for herself; I knew that. She was always so good, and so kind, and so yielding!” And Mr. Jones’s eyes filled with tears.

“Let me see, what *did* they call it?” said Mrs. Morgan. “I don’t seem to remember.”

“Did n’t call it anything,” said Jones testily. “Parcel of big fools! They just fought over it till they were ashamed of themselves, and then put it down as comet number so and so of that year. Think of it!” said he, with a sniff of contempt. “How would you like it, Mrs. Morgan, to have your children just named number so and so of that year?”

“I would n’t have it,” said Mrs. Morgan decidedly.

“Nobody would n’t,” said Mr. Jones. “Well, as you know, early in March last Mrs. Dudley died. I saw by the papers that there was going to be some contest over her will, and I said to myself, ‘Now, Jones, you may just as well see this thing through. You are well off, and can afford it.’ And so I came up here to Albany to review my youth, as I told you before, and to see the fun, if there was any,” said Jones, a little hoarsely, “in fighting over the bones.

“In the course of these last three weeks I have wandered all around the city. I have been to the Observatory, and seen the boss

telescope, and the calculating machine, and the picture of the Inauguration, and the clocks, and all the wonders. And I have seen that block of great houses in Hawk Street which Mrs. Dudley built, when she did n't know what to do with her money. I have worn out a good pair of taps stubbing along over these rough sidewalks. I have seen about all there is to see, and I am going home."

"You have taken a good deal of interest in the contest over the will," I remarked.

"Yes, I have. It has not been my way to hang around the surrogate's office when the fight was going on. A stranger among the mourners might excite remark. But I do not mind telling you that I took board at this house because I found out that you were an attorney in the case, and were stopping here. You see now why I have cultivated you so extensively. I really felt that I ought to tell you about myself before I went away. I have a good mind to show you my museum."

I expressed an ardent wish, in which Mrs. Morgan joined, that he would do so. He went

to his room, and returned to the parlor with a huge scrap-book, and a box of photographs and stereoscopic views illustrating Albany, the Observatory, and the Island of Bermuda. The scrap-book contained the newspaper extracts of which he had spoken relating to the Dudley Observatory and the Dudley family and estate, besides many little gems of poetry and pictures.

“Just thought I would bring them along in my trunk,” said Jones. “Did n’t know but I might find somebody in Albany that would like to see them.”

We were beginning (Mrs. Morgan and I) to admire Jones’s curious collection, when he hesitatingly took from the inside breast pocket of his coat a little case, and said, with a slight tremor in his voice, “I brought this down, too, thinking may be you would like to see Blandie, that is Mrs. Dudley, as she looked when she was a girl.”

He opened the antique case, and showed us one of those old-fashioned miniatures painted on ivory, which were in vogue before the

daguerreotype and photograph were known. The face was that of a brunette, apparently about sixteen. Aside from a little piquancy of expression, and a few gay ribbons which the painting had preserved in their original vividness, I failed to see anything especially noticeable in the picture.

"That is just the way she looked," said Jones, his voice trembling, "so many, *many* years ago, when she was so good, and so kind, and so yielding."

It was quite still in the room for half a minute.

"Fact is," he added, clearing his throat, "I have been just on the edge of stepping off into matrimony three times since, down there in Bermuda; but it was kicked over every time, and I just knew each time that it was the hurt I got with Blandie that did it. I could never really care for any other girl as I ought to, after losing Blandie Becker."

I glanced at Mrs. Morgan, as we all stood grouped by the centre table, looking at the pictures. There was an odd, puzzled expres-

sion on her face. She had straightened up, and was gazing intently at Jones. It was evident that some recognition, or some remarkable thought or idea, had suddenly occurred to her. At length, out it came from her lips, in a hard, quick, excited utterance: "Why! Be you Rube Jones?"

Mr. Jones was not looking towards her at the moment. He was startled by the exclamation and the tone of voice. He turned to the questioner with an air almost of alarm, and replied, "Well, yes, madam; that is what they call me at home."

"Well," resumed Mrs. Morgan, speaking very quickly and excitedly, "that is n't Mrs. Dudley's picture you have got there. She never looked like that."

"It's likely I might know," broke in Jones testily. "I had two of them painted, and gave Blandie one and kept the other."

"Yes," said Mrs. Morgan, swallowing hard, and snapping her eyes in a way peculiar to herself; "but Mrs. Dudley was n't Blandie Becker."

"What's that, — what's that?" exclaimed Mr. Jones. "Mrs. Dudley was n't Blandie Becker?"

"No, she was n't," replied Mrs. Morgan.

"Well, I say she was!" roared Jones.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Morgan, and she paused, and looked hard at Jones, and frowned.

"Well, may be she was."

"Of course she was," said Jones triumphantly.

It was clear to me that our hostess had changed her mind, and had decided not to tell what she knew; and I happened to know that Mrs. Dudley had been Miss Blandina Bleecker, and not Miss Blandina Becker. Was here some important mistake, or had they merely pronounced a name wrongly?

Jones talked on for a while, but it soon became evident that Mrs. Morgan's excitement and subsequent reticence had not escaped his attention.

"How did you know my name was Rube Jones?" he suddenly asked her.

"I did n't," she replied evasively.

“ Well, why did you ask? ” he persisted.

She did not explain this very fully, but merely said that she thought there was a young man in the city, long ago, of that name.

“ Very likely it was I,” said Jones.

Mrs. Morgan did not seem inclined to discuss this.

“ What was your maiden name? ” he asked.

“ You might call it Smith, or some such name,” said Mrs. Morgan, with an embarrassed laugh.

This was a rebuff, but Jones did not withdraw. He went to the verge of politeness in trying to get further information, but his efforts only resulted in a little snubbing to himself. Mrs. Morgan declined to gratify Yankee curiosity, as she termed it.

The harmony which had prevailed was somehow gone. Mr. Jones had now little to say, and seemed to feel that he had been too free and talkative. Was Mrs. Morgan inclined to be disagreeable? Or was there some mystery casting its shadow upon that social intercourse which had been so delightful in the early part

of the evening? The time dragged. Jones gathered up his museum, and went to his room.

"What an awfully obstinate man!" was Mrs. Morgan's comment the moment he had gone. "I was just on the point," she added, "of letting some facts out, but I am glad I did n't. Very likely he will find them out."

"Is he mistaken about something?" I asked persuasively.

"I should rather think he was," said my landlady, with a sly, secretive smile, seeming to imply a great deal more than the words expressed.

I waited silently.

"I will tell you some other time,— after he has gone home," she said.

I knew from previous experience of Mrs. Morgan's temper that urging would be useless, and, bidding her good-night, I withdrew.

During the next three days I saw Jones only at the table. That he and Mrs. Morgan were watching each other intently was clear to me. Another thing was unpleasantly apparent: Mr. Jones was suffering in some way to such a de-

gree that his face, handsome, rosy, and well preserved as it was ordinarily, had become pale, and almost haggard. It could readily be seen that he took his meals only for form's sake, and without appetite. I could not help observing also, as time went on, that he was shunning me, and that his glances toward Mrs. Morgan were furtive, and indicated a shrinking feeling on his part. It was not easy for me to make advances, under the circumstances ; but I tried to show him by my manner, and by little attentions at table, that I would like to be sociable, and that I desired to befriend him. Mrs. Morgan was very attentive, also, and was evidently sympathizing with him in his trouble, whatever it might be.

On the fourth day, in the morning, the landlady beckoned me mysteriously into the parlor. This was her customary way of intimating that something momentous was impending. She began the interview by crying a little, and then said she desired to counsel with me about Mr. Jones.

I expressed the warmest sympathy, and told

her that I should be only too glad to do anything in his behalf.

"Well, the fact is," said Mrs. Morgan (it occurred to me that she had caught the phrase from Jones), — "the fact is, he has found it out; I am satisfied of it; and he is so awfully proud that he is afraid to own it."

"Perhaps we could find some way to make it easier for him," I suggested vaguely, well knowing that direct questions were not the best way to fathom Mrs. Morgan.

"That is just it," she declared, with enthusiasm. "If you could persuade him — gently, you know — into the parlor, this evening, by telling him that we know all about it, and urging him not to care for us, and not to feel so."

"Certainly," I replied. "And what had I better tell him?"

"Tell him it is not so very wonderful that he did n't know, and that we sympathize with him, and want to talk it over," she suggested.

I perceived that I would have to ask the direct question.

"He has found out that Blandie was not Mrs. Dudley, I suppose?" I queried.

"I am sure he has; but I don't know whether he has found out who I am or not. You see, when my sister Blandie and I knew Mr. Jones, he took a great notion to Blandie, and it is her that he means; and now to come back here, and tell all that stuff about Mrs. Dudley, and make such an awful fool of himself!" said Mrs. Morgan, laughing through her recent tears.

"Oh, yes, I see," said I. "It was your sister, Blandie Becker, and *not* Blandie Bleecker, that is Mrs. Dudley, that Mr. Jones took a fancy to."

"That is just it," said Mrs. Morgan. And she added, with a laugh that had a touch of derision and merriment in it, "The *idea* that he should get Mrs. Dudley into his head, and get up that museum! *She* never even heard there was such a man as Rube Jones. She didn't get her money from Mr. Dudley. She wasn't a poor girl; she was the youngest daughter of Rutger Bleecker, one of the richest men that ever lived in Albany."

I assured Mrs. Morgan that these matters

interested me very much, and that I would do everything in my power to aid her in getting Mr. Jones safely through his difficult situation; and that I would, if the circumstances favored, try to induce him to come into the parlor that evening. Having made this arrangement, I went away to my office.

All that day, as I was at work at my desk, thoughts of Rube Jones were in my mind. I no longer wondered at his suffering and his changed appearance. A delicate and beautiful structure, built up by the noblest passion of his nature, and by years of dreaming and belief, had been shattered as if by a blow. The more I thought of it, the more wonderful the incident seemed, and the more sympathy I felt for the man. I became a good deal interested in the matter, and a little nervous in regard to the part I had in prospect in the affair, as I reflected upon it. But when evening came, the pleasant supper-table and the encouraging glances of Mrs. Morgan gave me back to myself, and I felt that success would be achieved.

After supper, as Mr. Jones went into the hall and took his hat to go out, I stepped to his side. There was no one near. I said quietly, "Mr. Jones, we really hope you will favor us with your company in the parlor some of the time. Mrs. Morgan and I have talked it over, and of course we know of those little things you got mixed about. I hope you will excuse me, but really we would like to chat with you if you are willing."

The color came in a quick flush to his face. I thought he would refuse me. I hastened to say, "I beg your pardon."

But Mr. Jones did not go out. He stood quiet, and I saw that his face quivered. With an effort he said, "Thank you." He seemed to hesitate; a moment more, and he laid aside his hat, and went with me into the parlor. We took chairs, and sat down near Mrs. Morgan, who was sewing by the table. She said, with some feeling, "I am very glad you have come in this evening."

There was an embarrassing silence. I was about to launch into a premeditated discourse, when Jones spoke.

"Well," he said, huskily, with a glance at our landlady, "so you are Polly Becker, Blandie's little sister, that I used to buy presents for."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Morgan, looking at him, at first surprisedly, and then very kindly; and she added, "I have got some of your presents yet, Rube Jones."

There seemed to be something pathetic about this, for I noticed that soon both of the old people were in a melting mood.

"And I suppose it is Blandie," said Jones, hitching nervously in his seat, and clearing his throat, "who is living just round the corner in Lodge Street."

"Yes," said Mrs. Morgan, feeling for her handkerchief, and beginning to sob.

"And she always taught school, and never was married," said Jones, breaking down, and the tears pouring over his handsome face.

"Oh, Rube Jones!" exclaimed Mrs. Morgan, in an outburst.

This was the climax. The air was cleared, and a very pleasant and emotional conversa-

tion about the affairs of long ago followed between the parties. There were explanations and statements of little matters, frivolous in themselves, but which these good people laughed and cried over as if they were more to them, as doubtless they were, than anything else in the world. Jones dwelt quite largely upon the evening walks and the doorstep conversations and the roses of the old times, and the pleasant little surprises, in the way of presents, which he prepared for Polly. Did she remember? Yes, she had not forgotten; and she remembered how Rube carried her on his shoulder, and the tricks she played, and how she pulled his ears and his hair. In laughing and crying over these reminiscences, Jones was as simple-hearted as a child.

Wishing to take some part in the conversation of the evening, I interposed a remark upon my premeditated topic. I spoke of the important part which the mistaken identity of persons has played in the courts. But I regretted my venture immediately, for I saw a look of pain cross the face of Mr. Jones.

He said, "I have seen earthquakes and I have seen hurricanes, but I never knew what it was really to tear up things until the last few days."

Mrs. Morgan perceived my mistake, and skillfully turned the conversation into its former channel. I saw that the subject of Mrs. Dudley, and the error in regard to her, was not a matter to be profitably alluded to in the presence of Mr. Jones. It dawned upon me that my mission in the parlor that evening was ended. I excused myself, notwithstanding entreaties to remain, and left the friends to their own devices. They made a late evening of it, and, as I subsequently learned, arranged their plans for the morrow.

By the arrangement, it fell to my lot, the next day, to show Mr. Jones the house where his old sweetheart resided. Mrs. Morgan had told her sister about matters, and she went that morning and gave her notice, so that Jones was expected. It was thought by Polly that it would be easier for Blandie to see Rube first without other company. So I piloted him

to the little wooden house where Miss Blandie Becker had her home, and where she had a school-room, and had taught very young children for many years. She had, however, ceased to teach her infant school, and was now living in the house with only a servant-girl.

As we walked toward the place, Rube told me that the discovery that Blandie was still living had overwhelmed him at first, and that he was still nervous. I encouraged him all I could, but it was easy to see that he was agitated. When we reached Blandie's house, I stepped to the lowly door-way and rapped, for there was no bell. A woman's voice said, "Come in;" and I entered, Mr. Jones following close behind.

Seated in the middle of the room was the old lady, dark, bent, and thin. She had a book in her lap.

I said, "Miss Becker, this is Mr. Jones," and presented him.

She glanced up timidly, and rose somewhat tottering from her chair. She stepped to

the other side of the room, to put her book away, before welcoming us, but she did not return. She stood with her face to the wall and her back toward us, and we knew that she was crying. She seemed like a poor frightened child. She told us afterward that she thought just then how poor an apology she was for that rich woman, Mrs. Dudley.

"Oh, it's little Blandie!" said Mr. Jones, softly crying in sympathy. "I know by the way she acts."

"I will be back in half an hour, Mr. Jones," I said; and I went out and closed the door after me. At the expiration of the half hour, when I returned, I found that Mrs. Morgan had come, just as I knew she would. What woman would have stayed away? There was Jones happy as a Turk, with the two women, one on each side of him, evidently admiring him, and regarding him as the handsomest old boy in the world. But little more of the details of this affair came to my knowledge. I noticed, however, for the next six weeks, that every evening Jones and the two

sisters were together, either in the parlor at Mrs. Morgan's, or at Blandie's house. Their talk was in regard to events remote in time, of which I understood but little. But I saw that the little presents Rube had given them long ago had been preserved by the two sisters. The duplicate of the picture Rube had cherished was still in Blandie's possession. This and all the little trifles were examined, and their preciousness dwelt upon as if they had some sacred quality, as indeed they had in the eyes of these people, who saw in them their own vanished youth. The season, as it went by, was evidently a lovely Indian summer to these friends, though the outward weather was, in fact, like the period in life at which they had arrived, of a wintry character. There seemed no end to their explanations and conjectures as to how it was and how it must have been, in that time so many years ago, when they were young, and when Rube and Blandie ought to have married. Each time they discussed the subject it yielded a fresh crop of recollections and surmises, all of which in-

variably led to the delightful conclusion that nobody was to blame except Providence and the post-office. As the trio became more and more familiar and happy in discussing these themes, the Dudley subject would sometimes be touched upon inadvertently. It was so intermingled with the affair that this could not be avoided. It was a long time, however, before Rube ceased to wince when that matter was referred to, and it was as far as possible, in kindness to him, allowed to rest in silence.

There was a theory, which Jones advanced in the latter part of the winter, founded upon a discovery of his at the State Library, which made some stir among us, and helped him very much upon this subject. He brought to light, in a bound volume of old Albany newspapers, the very notice of the marriage of Mrs. Dudley which had misled him so many years before. The Bleecker was spelled with a single *e*. By erasing the *l* with a knife, the name could be made Becker, with only a slight mis-spacing, very common in newspaper print. Jones claimed that his rival, Harry Day, had

played this trick upon him. Polly remembered, young as she was at the time, that there was some conspiracy on the part of her mother and Harry against poor Blandie and her rustic lover. Polly also thought she remembered hearing Harry laugh, some year or two afterward, on one occasion when he came up from New York, about some newspaper joke he had played upon somebody.

Whatever the facts may really have been, this theory of a newspaper trick helped Jones wonderfully. It restored his confidence, so that he became much less sensitive upon the subject of Mrs. Dudley. He said that any man might be the victim of a practical joke, or, if we would allow the expression, of practical villainy.

As Harry was "dead and gone," and as Polly said that, with all his fine airs and handsome clothes, he never amounted to anything, and as it was known that Blandie never favored his suit, Jones found it possible to forgive him. The trio, indeed, as they became more and more interested in recalling the

past, forgave everybody, and spoke of "poor Harry" and all the others who were deceased with feelings of kindness and admiration. The satisfaction with which their lives were reviewed by these friends was a very pleasant thing to contemplate. As the overflow of kindly sympathy was increased by their companionship from day to day, the discovery was somehow made that all must have been for the best, and that Providence, grim as it seemed to them, had really no hostile intentions.

As the winter drew to a close, Rube lingered, protracting his visit far beyond his original purpose. He confessed to me that he had never really known what home was before, since he had left his father's house, and said that he had not supposed he could ever be so contented and happy as he now found himself. The only time he recalled that he could compare with it was that golden summer which he had spent in Albany, in his early youth.

In April Mr. Jones announced that he must return to his home in Bermuda. His parting with his old sweetheart was witnessed by no

vulgar eyes, but Mrs. Morgan confided to me the fact that Blandie, old as she was, put her arms around Rube's neck, and that he cried as if he had been one of those infants whom Blandie had been accustomed to instruct in her younger days. Rube promised that he would come back the next winter, and if possible arrange to live permanently in Albany; and doubtless he would have done so if Blandie had lived. He remarked to me, as I walked with him to the train to see him off, and give him the last hand-shake for the household, that he would certainly come again the next season. But he added, in a general way, and with that air of independence which single gentlemen seem to affect, that, as there was not much going on in business, he didn't know but he might as well be "fooling around among the women" as doing anything else. I did not mean to remember this against him, for, after all, it was probably only "his way." He perhaps desired to impress me with the idea that he was an independent bachelor. I could not help seeing, however, from various indications,

that he emerged from the scenes he had passed through, unsubdued and elastic.

As already intimated, Blandie did not last long. She died the next summer, — just faded away, as yielding people so often do, with a submission that seems to divest the skeleton king of his terrors. Jones was duly informed of her decease by a communication directed to his home in Bermuda. He sent in return a letter of condolence to Mrs. Morgan. It was a model of its kind. I had not given him credit for so much good judgment as it evinced.

But Jones's real response came to me, in a private letter, which I was not to exhibit to Mrs. Morgan. He gave me an urgent invitation to visit him at his island home. He intimated that he should never visit Albany again. "The fact is, my dear boy," he wrote, "if I were to come to your city, now that Blandie is gone, just one thing would be inevitable: old as I am, I would certainly have to marry Polly, and that would never do. No woman shall ever come between me and the

little girl I chose so many years ago, who is now waiting for me in the better country."

Jones informed me that, after getting back to his old home, he found that many of his old thoughts came back to him, and he could not get rid of the idea that the Blandie of whom he had dreamed so many years was in some way connected with the Observatory.

Subsequently, I received letters from him upon various subjects, and they gave me great pleasure. He was a good correspondent. The sound of the sea and the charm of Bermuda, the roses and the coral and the warmth of the Gulf Stream, seemed to be conveyed in his letters. I saw in them, also, memories of that early love which had haunted him so long, and the shifting dreams which he still cherished. He referred often to the problem which his history presented. It was not easy to understand why an item in a newspaper should have been allowed by Providence to mislead him, and so change the color and fortunes of his whole life. Why was it, he asked me, that he and Blandie had lived apart, when they seemed

so clearly to have been intended for each other? And why was it that when he had so unexpectedly and wonderfully found her again she so soon faded away? But my old friend never complained of these strange dealings of Providence with him; he only sought reverently to understand them. I cannot recall a word of murmuring, although to me he revealed unconsciously the loneliness of his life. Truth to tell, there was something pathetic in the figure of Rube Jones as I saw him in his letters, carrying about in his thoughts, as the long years went round, in the narrow bounds of his island home, the constant memory of his thwarted affection.

Mr. Jones confessed that he still made clippings from the newspapers, and continued to increase his museum. He claimed that the history of Mrs. Dudley was a part of the history of his own mind, and that it was well to follow it up for that reason, if for no other.

As the years passed, our correspondence ceased, and Rube Jones was forgotten. Mrs. Morgan had died, and it would have been nat-

ural to suppose that Mr. Jones had gone the way of all the earth, also. But a recent event recalled him. My clerk, a handsome, impulsive young fellow, bounded into my office one morning last March, bursting with the intelligence that his young friend Charlie Wells, who had recently entered the Dudley Observatory as an assistant, had immortalized his name by finding a comet. He said it was the second comet ever found at the Observatory.

Some ten days later, there appeared in my morning's mail a letter with the Bermuda postmark. It contained about a dozen words of congratulation from Jones on the fact that "Blandie's Observatory" had found another comet. I answered the letter wonderingly. Could it be that my old acquaintance was still living? My curiosity was excited. I remembered a correspondent who had business which took him often to Bermuda. I was at some pains to find out through him about my old acquaintance. The report was a eulogistic one in regard to Jones. His excellent constitution and careful living had carried him into the

nineties, and he was still able to get about. I learned, however, of his death shortly afterward. The new comet (the Wells comet of 1882) was his last enthusiasm.



JACOB'S INSURANCE.

T resulted in a lawsuit.

The culmination was on the sixth day of September, 1881, that strange yellow day that attracted so much attention in the Eastern and Middle States, and the place of the trial was Albany.

Jacob's farm-house was near the Cove, about seven miles below Albany. From his door he could look down on the Hudson. The Cove, by the old landing, with its decayed houses, was also visible. The cars racing along the farther shore of the river were a lively feature. A dozen miles lower down the valley the river hides behind the Catskills.

In the house thus picturesquely situated, Jacob and his ancestors had lived for ninety years. The family name was an inheritance.

Jacob was forty-two years old, tall, blonde,

with a mobile face, and a dash of red in his cheeks.

On the seventeenth day of September, of the year previous to that of the yellow day, Jacob was awakened in the night. He heard his pigs squealing and "bucking," as he termed it, against his house. He went out, half dressed, and found the pig-pen a heap of embers. Mary, his wife, and William, his boy, came out. They found all the pigs, but they were scorched and knocking about, and one died in a few minutes of his burns. The family went to bed again, but did not sleep much.

In the morning Jacob got out his insurance policy, and he and Mary and Willie looked it over. They did not see anything about a pig-pen in it, and so he put it away again.

A week later Jacob's small barn, four rods south of his house, was burned. It was in the daytime, in the afternoon. Jacob came back from Albany at five o'clock, and saw only the vacancy. Willie said that at three o'clock it was on fire. Some of the neighbors had come, but nothing could be done. It was of pine boards, thirty years old, and empty.

The insurance policy had "all about the barns," in it. Jacob therefore went down to "Silas's," at the Cove, and made an application for an award. They had a local insurance company in town. They had seen "enough" of large companies; the mutual affair at home was better. Jacob's policy was in the home company.

As soon as Jacob told his story, Silas said it was all right.

The committee came next day. They awarded Jacob a hundred dollars. It was satisfactory.

Five days later Jacob's large barn, farther away from the house and on the other side, north (towards Albany), where all his hay and wagons and implements and crops were, suddenly took fire and burned up.

It was "astonishing"! What could have caused it? It was a heavy loss this time. Jacob had hard work to get his horses out and save them; all else was consumed. It was a very mysterious fire; all three of the fires had been mysterious. This last fire occurred in

the edge of the evening, just as it was growing dark. Jacob was at home in his house, and did not know of the conflagration until a woman came from the next house, screaming.

"I did n't know you had any enemy, Jacob," said old William Kamfer, just after the fire.

"I did n't, either," said Jacob gloomily.

There was comfort in the fact that the property had been insured. The day after the burning, Jacob went again to the Cove and made his application.

"Something seems to be after you, Jacob," said Silas, eying him keenly.

"Yes," said Jacob sadly.

Silas wrote the required papers, and said the committee would come up soon. The very next morning, at nine o'clock, the committee were on hand and examining the place where the barn had stood. They were "at it" more than two hours. There was a great deal of measuring and making inquiries; they said it was a heavy loss. Besides the long examination of the place where the large barn had been, they had the curiosity to go and look once more

where the small barn had been, and took some measurements there, and they poked in the ashes of the hog-pen, and walked about the premises. One of them carried a book, and jotted down the measurements and other items.

The committee delayed making any award. They said it was an important matter, and they would take time.

After three days Jacob went down to the Cove and inquired of Silas. The answer was that the board would meet before the end of the week, and that then something would be done about it. Some of Jacob's own immediate friends and neighbors belonged to the board. He spoke to them about it; they seemed reticent.

There was delay, and another visit of the committee, with more measuring, and a first and then a second meeting of the board. After about fifteen days, however, Silas walked up from the Cove, a distance of two miles, and left a letter with Mary for Jacob.

When Jacob came in to dinner he got the letter. It had the insurance company heading, and said: —

MR. JACOB WILSON:—

SIR,—In the case of the barn on your premises, which burned on the 29th of September, 1880, it is decided, in view of all the circumstances, that no award will be made.

This was signed by Silas, as secretary of the company.

A week later Jacob was in a lawyer's office in Albany, in private consultation.

"I don't want no lawing," said Jacob, "and my wife says so, too, although we cannot stand it to lose eighteen hundred dollars."

"Are you going to let them say you burned the buildings?" said the lawyer.

"They dar' n't say it," replied Jacob, fiercely.

"That is the meaning of it," said the lawyer.

Jacob was silent. The old family name, distinguished for honesty, was at stake, as well as the property.

The papers were served in November, and in January the cause was on the calendar at the Albany circuit of the supreme court of the

State. The calendar is always crowded, and there is delay in coming to trial. The cause was not reached until September the 5th, 1881, at an adjourned circuit, the day before the famous yellow day, already alluded to.

The city hall, in which the courts were held, having been destroyed by fire a short time before, the circuit was held in the Assembly chamber of the old Capitol. It seemed to Jacob an imposing scene, as he entered the famous room where so many laws were made, and in which the law was to be administered in his case. He had to wait, hanging around the court for three days before his case was reached. The time was not lost to him. He heard several trials, which were as interesting as story-books.

At five o'clock, on the evening of the 5th of September, number ninety on the calendar, which was Jacob's case, was reached. Jacob's lawyer and the opposing counsel announced themselves ready. Jacob was invited forward to a seat by the side of his lawyer, and the drawing of a jury began immediately. A few were rejected, but before six o'clock — the hour

for adjournment — twelve men who were satisfactory to both sides had been secured, and Jacob's lawyer had opened the case, and the trial was fairly begun.

The court accompanied its announcement of the recess until morning with a warning to the jury not to allow any one to talk with them about the case.

Jacob did not sleep that night. He was at the American Hotel, a quarter of a mile down State Street, in front of the Capitol. He and his wife were on the third floor, at the end of the hall, in room No. 241. As Jacob was going to his room, a large man, with dark, piercing eyes, standing in the door of room No. 239, said, "Your case is on, hey?"

"Yes," said Jacob, as he was passing.

"You'd better look sharp," said the large man.

"Why?" inquired Jacob wonderingly, as he paused.

"Rough business, burning down buildings," said the large man harshly; and he closed the door of his room with a bang.

Jacob passed on to his own apartment. There he talked over the events of the day with his wife. When he tried to sleep that night, the Assembly chamber and the face of the large man in room No. 239 haunted him.

In the morning, after breakfast, down in the front hall, Jacob met the large man again.

"Try a twist at it to-day, I s'pose," said the large man sharply to Jacob.

"Yes, the trial," answered Jacob, nervously.

"Somebody has been committing an awful crime," observed the large man. "Have you seen the sky?"

"Yes; it is strange," said Jacob, not perceiving the connection.

"They say it is the end of the world,—Sodom and Gomorrah," said the large man; and he turned and walked away.

At ten o'clock the court convened. As Jacob approached the Capitol steps, he saw a chubby person, on the brick pavement at the foot of the steps, explaining to a group of people his views of the weather. "I do not think myself," said the chubby person, glanc-

ing at the yellow canopy, "that it is anything supernatural, but I have seen *fifty people* this morning who think it is the end of the world."

Jacob found it oppressive in the court. The judge said it was a gloomy room and a gloomy day, and directed the officers to light the gas. The artificial light did not relieve the atmospheric pallor very much, although it enabled the judge and the lawyers to read their papers.

Jacob, and Mary his wife, and Willie, and the woman who saw the fire first, and came to Jacob's house, screaming, testified to the facts. This, with the documentary evidence, made the plaintiff's case. The short-hand writer of the court took down the evidence very rapidly, and at about twelve o'clock noon the plaintiff's side of the case was before the jury.

Then the opposing counsel proceeded to open the defense. After a few general statements he began to hint that there was a painful revelation to be made bearing upon the character of the plaintiff. The intimation was that Jacob had burned his own buildings to get the insurance.

“That is a mean and contemptible insinuation,” exclaimed Jacob’s lawyer, springing to his feet, “and you have no right to suggest such a thing, when you know you can’t prove it!”

“*Sir,*” rejoined the opposing lawyer, uttering the words with a pause after each, and a scathing hiss that made Jacob’s flesh creep, “*we will prove it!*”

Jacob felt as if the very ground was opening beneath him, as the lawyer went on, with diabolical coolness, to state that they had, although with some difficulty, secured the very witness who saw “this miscreant” (indicating Jacob) fire his own buildings. Happening to turn his head just then, Jacob saw the large man sitting within six feet of him, and watching him closely. This completed his confusion. The subsequent proceedings upon the trial were not very clearly apprehended by Jacob.

The court took a recess for dinner. As Jacob went to his room the large man stood in the door of room No. 239 again. “Hard at it, hey?” he said, as Jacob passed.

"Yes, but they can't prove it," said Jacob, with a determined accent.

"Sir," said the large man severely, "they can prove *anything*, if they have the evidence," and the large man went into his room and banged the door again.

In the afternoon the evidence upon the part of the defense was given. The first witnesses called upon that side did not seem very important to the case. They were, however, some of Jacob's neighbors, and the evidence was very painful to him on that account. One testified that there could not have been as much hay in the barn when it was burned as Jacob insisted there was. Another thought that Jacob had exaggerated the size of the bay where the hay was stored, and he thought, for that reason, there could not have been as much as was represented. Still another had walked over Jacob's farm when the hay and grain were growing, and was confident that there was only a "middlin' crop," and by no means as much as the plaintiff claimed.

The opposing counsel explained, with a

glance at the jury, that this evidence was presented not only as bearing upon the question of the amount of the loss, but as showing more clearly the nature of the attempt, "on the part of this wretched man," to defraud his neighbors.

There was a significant pause. The opposing counsel held a whispered conversation with his assistant attorney, and with some men whom Jacob recognized as members of the board; he then rose and said impressively, "We call Gotlieb Jansen."

A short, elderly man, rather thin than full-faced, but evidently a German, was sent forward from the back seats. Jacob recognized him; he was a "hired man," who worked about the neighborhood at the Cove.

Jansen gave his testimony through an officer of the court, who acted as interpreter. His statement was that, standing "over beyond" a hollow, a quarter of a mile away, in the field back of Jacob's large barn, he had seen Jacob come behind the barn, deliberately strike a match, and set the straw and hay and barn on fire.

The cross-examination of this witness by Jacob's counsel was the interesting feature of the trial.

"Ask him," said the counsel, "if he could see how Jacob was dressed."

"He says 'yes, he could,'" responded the interpreter, after putting the question to the witness.

"Ask him what color his clothes were."

"He says he wore brown, or a kind of red, iron-cloth overalls."

"Ask him whether Jacob had on boots or shoes."

"Dey vos poots, — dey vos poots," said the witness, making a cross-lots answer in broken English to save time.

"You understand my question?" said the counsel.

"Yaas, yaas, I untersthan," said Gotlieb.

"Ask him in German," said the court to the interpreter.

The interpreter complied, and responded, "He says they were boots."

"Ask him what time of day it was," said the counsel.

“He says it was just getting dark.”

“Ask him what Jacob had around his neck, when he saw him strike the match and set the fire.”

“He says it was a black handkerchief.”

“Ask him if he could see him plain.”

“He says ‘yes.’ ”

“Ask him whether he had on stockings,” said the counsel.

This question caused a slight ripple of merriment. Old Gotlieb glanced around, saw the fun, and laughing and shaking his head said, “Naw, naw, could not tell de shtockings.”

There was a brief re-direct examination, in which Gotlieb stated that he did not mean that he actually saw the match, but only saw Jacob stoop over and strike, as if it was a match, and then saw it kindle, and saw it grow to a large fire. He also explained that the overalls were blue instead of red.

It was apparent that Gotlieb's left eye had been injured or lost. His examination was concluded by a single question, asked by Jacob's lawyer, which drew out from Gotlieb the

answer, "Naw, naw, can only see from von eye."

As the concluding evidence in the case Jacob was now recalled formally to deny, as the rules of evidence require, the statements made by the witnesses against him. As he came upon the witness-stand, it was apparent that a great change had come over him. Was there such a pallor upon his face, or was it the strange yellow light of that strange day? His voice had sunk almost to a whisper, and he seemed weak and uncertain in his steps. He quietly answered "No" to the long, formal questions involving the statements which had been made against him, and that closed the evidence in the case.

The counsel "summed up:" the opposing counsel assuming and urging to the jury that Jacob was the profoundest rascal and hypocrite in the county, and Jacob's lawyer asserting that Gotlieb was a perjurer. In a few words the court charged the jury, and they were sent out, in the keeping of three officers, to a committee-room, to deliberate and find a verdict.

It was nearly six o'clock; the court adjourned for the day. It had been a dreadful day to Jacob. He had not imagined that his old and near neighbors could look upon him as a rascal, and he had not supposed any man living would have dared to assail his good name as the opposing lawyer had assailed it. The revelation of these facts, the strange story told by Gotlieb, and the gloom of the strange day seemed to mingle in a dreadful nightmare as he walked to the hotel. He went to his room, and lay down, and closed his eyes, hoping to rest. The scenes of the day were as vivid before him as a picture. And, through them, he would remember from time to time, with a sudden sharp throb, the dreadful suspense he was under. "Suppose the jury should find against him!" His father had been one of the consistory of a church when living, and Jacob himself had long been a church member. The hurt to his reputation and to the family name was the sharpest sting.

Jacob got up, and went to the "far end" of the hall to ask Willie to come. Willie's room

was empty. Jacob came back, and with his wife had family prayers in their room. It was ten o'clock. His anxiety was intense. He knew where the jury-room was. He knew that when the jury agreed they would seal up their verdict and separate, because the judge had told them to do so, and to bring in their verdict in the morning. He walked up to the Capitol, and, looking at the windows, saw that all was dark. On his return the large man was in the hall, up-stairs near his door.

"I think the jury must have agreed," suggested Jacob falteringly. "I see it is all dark in their room."

"Sir," said the large man, glaring at him, and speaking with a withering severity in his tone and manner that made Jacob shrink as if he had received the cut of a whip-lash, "the jury has found against you ; I heard of it half an hour ago."

Jacob's eyes fell, and the great misery settled down upon his heart. He turned silently, and walked away to his room. What was the night that followed to Jacob Wilson? Those

a seat, looking. He had steeled himself ; he was white and firm.

“Gentlemen,” said the clerk, “have you agreed upon your verdict ? ”

“We have,” replied the foreman, rising, and handing a buff envelope to an officer. The officer carried it to the clerk. The clerk offered it to the judge.

“Open it,” said the judge, sententiously.

Jacob saw the clerk tear open the envelope, unfold the paper it contained, and give it a long, earnest look.

“Gentlemen of the jury,” said the clerk, “you will listen to your verdict as the court hath recorded it.”

Jacob held his breath.

“You say you find,” continued the clerk, “in favor of the plaintiff, in the sum of eighteen hundred and fifty dollars ; and so you all say.”

The jurymen nodded.

“You will please vacate the box, gentlemen,” said the judge. “Mr. Clerk, you may now draw a jury in ninety-seven.”

face and the tears. He got to the room and told Mary, and they had what the landlord described as "a time." The landlord said that he happened up there, and there was more praying and crying than was allowable in that hotel. As the painful, nervous strain was taken off, Jacob became faint, and lay down, and Mary went out and got him a lemon.

Soon there came a knock at Jacob's door. It was the large man. Jacob sat on the edge of the bed, eating the lemon.

"I really must beg, Mr. Wilson, the privilege of making an apology," said the large man, advancing to the middle of the room, resting his hand upon a table, and speaking with a courtliness and respect that seemed to lift Jacob up into a position of importance.

He continued, "I must have been misinformed by the officer about that verdict last night. Of course we know there has been too much tampering with juries, and a habit of finding out verdicts before they are rendered. It is all wrong, certainly, though it is often

"And that was what you were watching *me* for?" asked Jacob timidly, shuddering as he saw the gulf.

"Why, my dear, good fellow," said the large man, softening, "what else on earth did you *suppose* I was watching you for?"

Jacob pondered, and was silent. The large man turned, and walked out of the room.

Within half an hour the president of the insurance company came in. He said he desired to congratulate an honest man, and explained, mysteriously, that they were on the right track at last. He remarked, speaking in a confidential manner, that he had always told the folks that Jacob was "not that kind of a man."

"Thank you," said Jacob huskily.

"You and your father before you have lived in our town too long to be treated in this way," said the president, wiping a tear from his eye.

The president went away.

One by one, Jacob's old neighbors and various members of the company dropped in,

was only one of many, and that in the courtroom it had already been forgotten.

There was no reason why Jacob should remain longer in town. At four o'clock in the afternoon, he and Mary were in their wagon, in front of the hotel, about to leave. Just then Willie came running down the sidewalk in great excitement. He came to the side of the wagon, his warm brown eyes dancing, and said, with what breath he had left, "Oh, father, father, they have found it all out! It's Andrew Venner, and they have got him in jail."

"Andrew Venner?" said Jacob, surprised; and he added, turning inquiringly to Mary, "I never had any trouble with Andrew."

Just then the large man came down the sidewalk, walking very rapidly. He said pleasantly to Jacob, "Got him sure. I told you so. By the way," he added, turning back after he had passed, "did you ever have any difficulty with Andrew Venner?"

"No," answered Jacob; "only he worked for me one time, and my woman here didn't seem to" —

ingly, "I beg that you will not think that I would willingly distress you by— Hullo, there is a man I *must* see before he goes," and the large man dashed off across the street.

Jacob looked after him a few moments, then gave his horses a cut with the whip, and started for home.

In the foreground, at our feet, were the river and the boats, and on the farther shore the little village of Athens. Still beyond, a dozen miles away, we saw a wide, green, undulating valley, shut in by the bold, wooded Catskills. We saw the Mountain House, — like a white sheep dotting a green hill-side, — and knew that just below it is found the place where Rip Van Winkle slept so long. As we were speculating upon the exact place which Irving intended, Mr. Toby came climbing up a side path from the landing to where we were. Cookie and I were alone upon the promenade. Mr. Toby knew me at once, and I remembered his kind, genial face and keen, gray eye, and after a little I placed him correctly, and we shook hands very cordially.

“Glorious view, — is n’t it?” he exclaimed with enthusiasm, turning toward the wide landscape.

We sat down and drifted into conversation.

After some general remarks Mr. Toby said, —

“I never was here but once before, and that

near-sighted, put on her glasses for a long shot, and was greatly taken with the view. She thought the mountains over there were the most interesting and beautiful sight she ever beheld. When we found in the guide-book that right down there below the Mountain House was wherē Rip Van Winkle slept, it seemed to us like fairy-land. I do not think it is possible to convey any idea of how happy we were. We had read of these things times enough, but to actually see them was more of a show than you might suppose.

“ But there was one thing in the mean time that seemed strange. Right down *there*, near those iron-furnaces, by the landing, I got a glimpse of a fellow I had seen on the boat. I had not noticed him on the steamer particularly, but I remembered his looks when I saw him by that old building. He had a way of dodging behind something, whenever I turned my face toward him, that I had noticed on the boat, and I saw he did the same here, although he was so far away. My attention was called to him by that.

souls that ever lived. She took care of us as if we had been her own children. She got a team and driver and took us to the Mountain House, and we went and saw the Falls and all the wonders. There were city people on the mountain and through the country everywhere, as there always are, I understand, up here at this time of year. It is handy by New York, you know, and a good place to run to in hot weather.

“ Well, in the midst of all this, I saw, every now and then, that young man dodging out of sight. I would not have thought so much of it had it not been for one circumstance that gave point to it. The circumstance was this. One evening I went out of aunty’s house to walk up the road a little ways alone, by moonlight. The mountains and the spruce-trees seem strangely like a panorama or a show-picture, when seen in that way. As I stepped out of the house and off the piazza, I saw that young man in the door-yard, speering around, and looking in at the windows. There was lamp-light inside, and he could see the

Aunty thought it was nothing uncommon in the summer time, when so many visitors were in the neighborhood. But when I told her he had been in the door-yard she looked at it differently. She had missed a few things around the house, including some clothes spread on the grass to dry, and her suspicions were aroused.

“The next evening, and the next, I got a glimpse of the young man again, hanging about the premises after dark. As he started off up the road in his customary manner, the third evening, I made bold to call out to him, ‘Hullo there!’ The moon was getting up a little later then, so that I had only a very dim sight of him. I could see, however, that he walked on without paying any attention, and disappeared in the shadow of the woods. I went into the house and related the incident. We felt that the thing was getting serious. It seemed clear that something ought to be done. We tried to get a little fun out of it by comparing the mysterious stranger to Rip Van Winkle, but Aunty said it was no joking mat-

pleasant notoriety. Sarah and I promised that, whatever might happen, we would keep still about the young man. We all agreed in the opinion that the matter should be investigated. The plan was for me to stay out on the piazza in the shadow and watch, and Aunty, with her hired girl and Sarah, to be in the house in the usual way. If the mysterious stranger came into the yard, I was to speak to him, and if he started away, it would be my duty to follow him and get some sort of explanation. Sarah suggested that it was not safe for me to follow an unknown man off alone in the dark, and indeed it was not, but I was willing to risk it. The young fellow did not seem to me dangerous. He had a rather boyish face. It did come into my mind that a revolver would be handy, but I never carried one, and concluded to get along without it in this instance.

“It was quite dark when I took my place on the piazza under the shadow of some vines. Just at my right hand the window was partly open, and the light was streaming out. I had

Going out through the front gate into the darkness, I could see the young man, not more than two rods from me. It was pokerish, pursuing an individual who might turn at any moment and shoot me ; but having undertaken the pursuit, it would not do for a newly married man to hesitate. The stranger quickened his pace until he began to run, and I followed him, keeping about a rod behind and talking to him. I asked him what he meant by haunting our premises night after night, and told him if he would stop and give an account of himself, that was all I wanted. I did not talk loud, but in a persuasive way, feeling a little scary, I confess. He ran for a quarter of a mile, — until we came to where there was woods on both sides of the road. Then he slowed up, kind of breathing hard, and I stepped a little nearer to him. By and by he stopped right in the road. It was not my plan to go close up, but I went within six or eight feet, keeping a good clinch hold of my club.

“ ‘ Who are you ? ’ said I. ‘ What are you hanging around houses for in this way ? ’

crack as he poked his way in the darkness, until the sound died in the distance, and he was gone.

“With the envelope in my hand, I went back to the house, pluming myself on my boldness in the adventure, but feeling puzzled in regard to its termination. As I came to the gate the women were there waiting, and I remember to this day how Sarah welcomed me with a sly caress in the dark. I knew she was proud of me, and glad to have her aunty see that I was such a tremendous fellow. In the still summer night they had heard me talking loud up the road. I told them all about my hostile expedition, so to speak, and about the envelope, and we went into the house. We gathered around the table on which the lamp was standing, and examined the outside of the little package. There was no writing on it. It was not sealed, and Aunty pulled out the contents. Some old letters, apparently much worn by carrying, and a fresh piece of paper with a little writing on it, and a tin-type came to the light.

an engagement, boy and girl fashion. Along toward the last of the war, Amos got fired up with patriotism and a big bounty, and fear of the draft, and went to fight the battles of his country. But before he went, Sarah said she was not going to stay behind and risk being one of the girls who had to dangle along in the hope of a soldier by and by. She had seen too much of that sort of thing. It was now or never. And so, two hours before Amos started with his company for the South, he and some of the boys went over to Smith's, and the knot was tied good and strong.

"I may as well say here that I never had seen Amos Smith. But I am told that he was very pious, and everybody liked him. Young as he was, he used to lead the conference meetings sometimes. Perhaps they have made him out handsomer and better than he was. It is human nature to think well of the departed.

"As near as I can find out there was some crying and one thing and another, between Amos and Sarah when he left; but after the news came that he was among the crowd of

to have looked at them first, but I was newly married, and did not understand that then. I had to take their word for it that Amos was still in the flesh. With a view to seeing the proofs, I took the liberty of doubting the fact; but I was showered with reproaches by aunty, and Sarah became more and more cold and forbidding. I had supposed, up to that time, that a married man, or one who had supposed he was married, still had the right to exercise private judgment, but I found out my mistake. It became clear to me that if I was intending to do anything with these women, I must *believe* that which they passionately asserted in regard to the bodily existence of Amos Smith. It was long after midnight before we got down to anything like rational talk. They did show me one thing at last. Aunty had received, that very afternoon, from Portland, a letter signed by an old neighbor, Jared Babcock, which conveyed a mysterious warning, that a strange thing had happened, and that we must be prepared for it. I will not deny that this letter knocked me completely over. We had a

from a life of loneliness into the social sunshine. I had tried as a single man to carry my head high, but after I was thirty, the joke was always against me. And then there are sacred feelings which I will not mention. It seemed a bitter, cruel thing, to have all this end in a farce.

"But I was not wholly selfish. I do not mean to show myself worse than I was. I could not look at Sarah and think how she stood in the affair without a shudder. People would pity and they would laugh.

"As it began to be daylight, we pretended to go to rest. Aunty Robinson showed me into a little back bedroom, and took 'Mrs. Smith' with her, to her own room.

"This was felt to be right, but it was very trying to my feelings. It was *my* notion, first, to call Sarah Mrs. Smith. Perhaps there was a spice of malice in it. I do not think any man could keep his temper under the circumstances I have described. Of course I was sorry immediately after I had said Mrs. Smith. Yet it was received as all right and proper,

“‘I know Amos well,’” said Aunty. “‘He is generous, and true-hearted, and poor. And he always was so conscientious! I hope it will not kill him to give up Sarah. I have already telegraphed to Sarah’s father to come, and if he had not started for home, but was still in New York, he will be here to-morrow, you can be sure. The thing for you to do is to see Amos this evening, and talk the matter up. He has some claim. He let Sarah’s brother have part of his bounty money, two hundred dollars, when he went away; and of course he ought to have it again, and *you* must be liberal.’

“‘Dear Aunty Robinson,’ said I with tears in my eyes, ‘do you suppose money is of any account in such a matter as this?’

“She put down her knife and fork, looked at me through her glasses for a few seconds, and began to cry.

“The breakfast did not help us much. As to dinner, I do not think we had any; and how it ever came to be evening I cannot tell. But undoubtedly the sun went down as usual;

and the real facts came before me. Just as I was reflecting upon the need of caution, I heard the brush crack in the woods, and a minute later I descried a form in the road.

“‘Is that you?’ I asked.

“‘I am here,’ replied Amos, in the same light voice, which I now remembered so well.

“We got into conversation immediately, and I said, ‘You are Amos Smith, of Portland,’ and he said, ‘Yes, Mr. Toby, I am.’ One thing led on to another, until at last I asked him whether he could give up Sarah, or what his ideas were. He seemed to be a *still* kind of fellow, and did not answer me directly. It appeared as if he was willing to let me do all the talking. Finally, he asked if I would go with him into the woods, to his caboose as he termed it, where he said we could talk it over. I did not really like the idea, but I poked through the brush after him. He took me nearly half a mile to a kind of camp, where he had fixed a warm-weather sleeping place. There was a little fire burning on the ground, and some old boards leaning against a log,

Maine, I am not a man who trifles. If you bring me seven hundred dollars within three days, you will never see me again. I will go West, and send you a copy of the divorce papers, so that you can marry your wife legally and all right. But if you don't, I shall go and see her ; and if she and I, or her folks and I, meet, that is the end of it. I shall claim her and have my rights. You can take your choice. There it is, and I mean just what I say. If you have any change with you to bind the bargain, that will be our contract.'

"I do not claim to be unusually bright," said Mr. Toby, looking keenly at me and then at Cookie ; "but when I heard that speech I comprehended. The words and manner, and everything about it, seemed like a dime-novel. It was anything but natural. And I claim that the fact that I was sitting by a miserable, lying, thieving vagabond was made just as plain to me that minute, as though I had known him a thousand years. The whole thing flashed upon me, as if I had been struck by lightning. The folks will try to have it to

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I don't know, but I dare say he was acquainted with Amos in the army. It is queer all round. I think some of the writing is a forgery. I don't believe Jared Babcock ever wrote that letter; and that new letter cannot have been written by Amos, although it is like his writing, I must say.'"

The narrator paused a moment, as if reflecting.

"Did you find out who it was afterward?" asked Cookie eagerly.

"Wait until you hear," said Mr. Toby. "The short of it is, I was sent at evening to meet Amos, or whoever he was, again. But he failed to come that time. So the next morning I went up to his caboose before breakfast, bound to find out the facts. I had more than a hundred different things enjoined upon me to do and to ask before I started. Between Aunty and Sarah's father, there was no end to the instructions. They were laying all kinds of traps to find out whether it was Amos.

"Well, I got to the place all right, and looked around. It did not seem so pokerish

and I don't think I was as much worked up over it this time as most folks would have been. I had seen a good deal of that kind of thing too, in a hospital, at one time.

“We gave notice, and there was an inquest according to law. And it was found out that the fellow was just that kind of a vagabond I had thought he was. Whether he died of heart disease, or by taking some of the drugs found in his vest pocket, was not exactly clear. It was told by somebody, and found to be true, that he had served a three years' term at Sing Sing, just down the river here, and had only been out of prison two months.”

Mr. Toby ceased his narrative, and looked contemplatively toward the mountains, apparently absorbed in thought. I was about to speak when he said, —

“I have told you this just as it seemed at the time. But there was a secret in it that we kept close for a long while, and nobody suspected. Before we gave notice, Sarah's father and Aunty and Sarah and I went to get a look at the dead man. They wanted to see

sting of it had passed away. All the public ever knew of it was that a tramp from Sing Sing had been found dead near the road. It was not an unusual occurrence in this thronged and busy valley. A careless newspaper paragraph was the sole record of the event.

"Did n't want to live, did he?" suggested Cookie, in a pause of the conversation.

"That is just what I tell the folks," responded Mr. Toby. "When he saw Sarah, I suppose it brought back old times. I do not wonder that he crept around and peeked in through the window. It is my opinion that he ended his days with the drugs; I have no doubt of it. And it makes my heart ache when I think of the boy dying alone over there in the woods, — Hullo, there comes the down boat, and I must go. I am traveling alone this time, and just walked up here to wait. This talk has done me a world of good. If you ever come our way, call. Good-by, sir, good-by." And with a shake of the hand for each of us, he was gone.

We watched him as he hastened down the



HATTIE'S ROMANCE.

IT began in that little brick house near the willows, on the margin of the river, just within the southern bounds of Albany. From those upper windows Hattie looked out upon the Hudson and the distant Catskills.

Hattie's romance seemed unfortunate. She gave her heart away to a young man before she had seen him half a dozen times, and while yet there was scarcely a speaking acquaintance between them. She, with her widowed mother, had started out upon that dangerous womanly enterprise, "taking a few boarders." Such an enterprise is justly termed dangerous in a large and wicked city, because of the social risks involved. In this very instance beautiful little Hattie was fascinated by the second boarder who came to the house. He was a handsome

discreet a thing as to write a letter to her idol, imploring his pity and regard, or, if that were impossible, his departure. She even went so far on one occasion, at midnight, as to write such an epistle, when she ought to have been asleep. And a very poorly written letter it was, no doubt. She had enough discretion remaining, however, to burn the letter at the last moment, instead of leaving it in the young man's room, as she had intended.

Hattie was a Sunday-school scholar, and was rarely absent from her class at the little stone church around the corner. She had too much conscience and too much good training to really think of drowning herself in the Hudson River. Nevertheless, she eventually reached a state of mind in which the wish to become an angel was not a musical or poetic aspiration merely ; it was a very sincere desire in her case. And it is not to be concealed that on a particular Sunday afternoon, when monsieur was out walking with a young lady, Hattie went down by the river and stood on the dock, and looked pensively into the deep water for a long time. This

jurymen, and the witnesses. Hattie noticed that there was no woman in the room except herself. The prosecuting officer was the District Attorney of the county. The hour was ten A. M. It seemed to our heroine that the Judge and the lawyers were very rude and harsh in their treatment of each other.

"Mr. District Attorney," said the Judge, "you ought to have your cases ready, and not delay the Court. This is the third morning we have been here without business."

"I do not receive any reprimand from this Court, sir," said the District Attorney, sharply. "I do not accept it or submit to it in any degree. I wish to suggest that I am not a creature of this Court. I am elected by the people of this county, and I am responsible to them for the manner in which I discharge my duties."

"All right; keep cool," said the Judge, with laconic brevity and provoking indifference, as he stroked his long white mustache.

A policeman came into the room, and stepping up to the District Attorney, whispered to him. The District Attorney nodded mysteriously.

that he, a stranger in the city, had boarded for three months in River Street, at Hattie's home, and that on Christmas Day (two weeks before the trial) the house next to Hattie's home had been broken into, and household goods taken. It had been done between the hours of one and two o'clock in the day. The family had gone out at one, and at two o'clock the goods appeared in a pawnbroker's shop on the next block. This fixed the hour when the crime had been committed. Monsieur Leclerc being a stranger and foreigner, and boarding in the house adjoining that from which the goods were taken, was naturally enough suspected. But the clinching thing about it was that the pawnbroker in whose shop the goods were found was confident that monsieur was the identical young man who had brought them there.

As this evidence came out, monsieur whispered with great earnestness to his boyish counsel the words, "I can prove zat I vas not zare."

"No loud talking," said the Judge, glancing in the direction of the prisoner and his counsel.

"Silence!" proclaimed the blind Crier from

and saw him return promptly at two o'clock to the house, where all the family knew that he met them at the Christmas dinner.

As Hattie told her story in a simple, unaffected manner, shyly avoiding any look toward monsieur, the practiced eye of the District Attorney at once divined her secret. When he came to cross-examine her, he asked the direct question whether she loved the prisoner. Hattie, with a scared look, remained silent.

The boyish attorney objected to the question.

The public prosecutor urged his point. He sincerely believed that women unnumbered had on that very witness stand perjured their souls to save their lovers from the just penalty of the law. Whatever he might think in regard to Hattie, he knew that his duty as a public officer required him to examine her upon this subject.

There was a brief argument. Then the Court ruled that any feeling or bias on the part of the witness for or against the prisoner was a fact which the jury had a right to know.

And thus Hattie found herself face to face with the demand that she should make confes-

prise or something incredible. But as the matter was discussed by the lawyers the thought became more familiar, and her womanly courage rose to the emergency. "What if this should be the turning-point, the opportunity she had longed for to save monsieur?" she reflected. And so by the time the discussion was ended, and the Judge had decided, she was ready. And when his Honor said, very kindly, "Tell us how it is; you need not be afraid: do you care much for him?" she replied, with blushes, but very frankly, "Yes, sir."

After this the District Attorney strove in vain to confuse her. She felt that she was engaged in a warfare for the man she loved, and she shrank from no sacrifice. She confessed, not by a consenting silence, but in words fully and plainly, that she loved Monsieur Leclerc with her whole soul, though he had never known it.

There was an unusual silence in the courtroom. People leaned forward to hear. Unveilings of human hearts, showing hatred and revenge, were quite common there; but to look

And so the secret that Hattie had cried over and prayed over, the sweet yet torturing secret she would have died to conceal, came to the light of day in this strange fashion. She told in her evidence of her looking for all the comings and goings of the prisoner. She described the watch-tower she had contrived with a low stool and an attic window, from which she had each day gained a view of her hero as he came to his dinner. She remembered the days when he was late or early, and on some occasions the minute of his appearance, as accurately as if she had been an astronomer and he a comet or a star. The whole story was so frank and simple-hearted that to doubt it and harass little Hattie by asking ill-natured questions seemed like trampling upon flowers. However unfortunate it might be for the District Attorney's fame and success, it was felt by all present that a little love story and the heroism of a pure young girl had been more than a match for his astuteness and learning.

Hattie was very much excited as she stepped down from the witness stand, and resumed her

As matters turned out, it seemed that Hattie was not far wrong in these views. The Judge complimented her in his charge to the jury, and the jury, believing her story, thought the pawnbroker must have been mistaken in the matter of identity, and acquitted monsieur.

Soon after the trial, it came to light that another person besides Hattie had seen monsieur upon the ice that Christmas Day, so that Hattie's evidence was fully confirmed. And it came to pass that on the next Christmas Day there was but one boarder at the little house by the willows, with Hattie and her mother, and that one was Monsieur Leclerc, much honored and respected, and he was there to stay.

twice in the year. The fat of the land has been gathered in at the hotel to feed the Court and the multitude who come to the county-seat for justice.

When we reach the nearest railroad station and step off the cars, we discover a large, old-fashioned carriage and a pair of magnificent grays ready to receive us. The alert hotel proprietor has come all the way from his house to greet us, and his cheery voice says, "This way, Judge, with your friend, if you please."

As the grays prance along, the little valley opens to our view. It seems hardly more than a mile wide. The heights on either side are clothed with bright green woodlands, and along the highest line is a dark, rich fringe of pines. A sluggish stream winds through the middle of the valley. Just before us sleeps the hamlet, and soon we see the gleaming tin upon the church spire, and then we distinguish the court-house and other buildings. A dreamy blue in the air hangs sleepily over the landscape, imparting a sense of deep repose.

lawyers are admitted and assigned seats in the order of their supposed rank and importance.

From dinner there is an adjournment to the court-house. The temple of justice is densely packed with people. In the little niche of a gallery high up in the wall, opposite the bench where the august court is seated, are groups of beautiful country girls and women, gazing in rapt wonder at what seems to them, doubtless, the brilliant pageant below. The lawyers also, at the bar, concede in a pleasant way, by their dress and manner, the importance of the occasion. Nate, who is, legally speaking, the pride and flower of Schoharie, appears in a bright new suit, with blue coat and gilt buttons. He is known far and wide as one of nature's noblemen. If Nate would only try, the people say, he would be a giant. As it is, he is regarded as another Daniel Webster, with a great dash of the impulsive, wayward, reckless boy in him, that too often defeats him in the far-reaching, solemn purposes of life.

The business of the court proceeds. Several petty matters are disposed of. Then the prose-

upon such a trivial matter in Schoharie. A lawyer is therefore privately interviewed, and states that Polly Hollow is a clove in the mountains having the general style and description of a breech-loading gun-barrel, inasmuch as things going in at one end must go out at the other; there is not room in the clove to turn around. He says the hollow was named after Aunt Polly, — a negress who resided there for many years. He further takes occasion to point out to us a young man, who has been brought into court charged with a misdemeanor, and whose face has a curious expression of sheepishness and low cunning. That man, he informs us, is a Slughter. He explains that the Slughters are a band or tribe as marked and peculiar as the gypsies. They have developed into a distinct people in this valley during the present century. They are so immoral that to be seen frequenting the Slughter settlement is a disgrace to any citizen. To call an upright man a Slughter is a provocation that greatly mitigates an assault and battery in the eyes of a Schoharie jury.

The prosecuting officer says, "May it please the Court, we must see about this man who refuses to support his wife. It is a matter for our county authorities, of course, but there are circumstances which" —

A small, active attorney from the city springs to his feet, and, interrupting, says, "If the Court please, I appear in this case. The learned and ingenious gentleman need not explain how he gets this matter here. It is a proceeding that ought not to be tolerated anywhere. This *man* that the prosecuting officer talks about is Georgie Wilson, and he is hardly fifteen years old."

The Judge whispers with the Associate Justices of the county, who sit with him, and then says, "Where is the accused? Let him be brought forward."

"Stand up, Georgie," says his counsel.

A dandyish, sprightly little fellow, tastily dressed in handsome clothes from the city, with a bright face, light clustering curls, and blue eyes, jumps up and stands before the court.

"Won't take care of his wife, hey?" says the Judge, with an amused smile.

for THE COURT OF RECORDS.

of the State of New York? This boy, who is well connected and respectable, has been kept in jail two weeks on this charge. His relatives, who are in good circumstances in the city, are, of course, very much annoyed by these proceedings. The boy came out here into the country one sunshiny day and was entrapped into this marriage."

The prosecuting officer replies sharply to this, and a discussion springs up which continues for ten minutes. Meanwhile, the two children are apparently making up their quarrel. Lucy begins to whisper to Georgie, and they sit down close together in two chairs handed them by counsel. Georgie's light curls look very pretty as he nods his approval of what Lucy is saying to him. Instead of listening to the counsel, all are slyly watching the manœuvring of this little pair of robins. Georgie makes advances, and Lucy chirps and twitters in a very bewitching way. Counsel, in whispers, compare them to the Babes in the Wood. As the prosecuting officer fulminates and thunders, the little romance in progress just

“Go around there by the Judge and be sworn, Sissy,” says Georgie’s counsel persuasively.

Lucy hears this, and obeys, and the clerk mumbles the oath to her. At the close of the formula “You will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, — kiss the book,” her cherry-red lips meet the calf-skin cover of the ancient volume with a delicious smack, while she looks sweet and smiling at Georgie. Then follows her examination. The prosecuting officer persuades her into the truthful acknowledgment that she has made complaint against Georgie for not supporting her. She admits that soon after they were married, about a month ago, Georgie left her at the hotel and went away home to his mother, “and did not come back for a week,” she says, pouting; but she adds that when he did come back he gave her two dollars, and paid her board at the hotel besides.

She admits also that he often asked her to walk down by the creek after they were married, and that she would not go, because she

Lucy comes down from the stand and sits by Georgie again, and he takes her hands, and they look wonderingly into each other's faces, as children do.

"Now, your Honors," says Georgie's counsel, "you must see how this is. This little girl, who is older than she appears, and was a servant, has caught this boy and privately married him. He is of good family: he could not take this girl home with him, probably because his mother would not want her there. Let this proceeding stop, and Georgie and his friends will make the best of it. He is married to the girl, and they will try to take care of her in some way. I am authorized by them to say this to the Court."

The Court takes a lenient view of the case. Georgie is directed to stand up, and the Judge delivers a lecture to him in regard to his duties as a husband. Georgie is informed that it is perhaps unfortunate for him that he has married "this girl" (the little beauty's cheeks burn at this), but that he must nevertheless take care of her. He is permitted to go at

notified that a committee of the Democratic party will be appointed to consider the matter. It is said that we will see the result in the morning.

We retire to rest. The fragrance of grasses and clover is wafted in at our open windows. Across the meadows back of the hotel, in a grove, we see lights flitting here and there, and the sound of far-off tinkling music is borne to our ears. It is the negro population enjoying a dance, as part of the festivities of the week.

The lawyers of Schoharie County are found to be wonderfully pleasant fellows. The Judge and his comrade discover that these gentlemen sleep but little. It is a habit with them to spend their nights in the valley upon great occasions in hilarity and good fellowship. The Judge and his comrade virtuously keep aloof from these nightly carousings. But how can this sanctimonious pair, with their faces pale and worn with city life, foul air, and excitement, hint to these strong, healthy, vigorous gentlemen that nightly rejoicing is not calcu-

curiosities of the place? We elect to have John, and soon he comes to the hotel. He is a robust, medium-sized man, a quaint scholar, a genuine lover of nature, and has the quick step and merry eye of a boy. He tells us that he had part in the grand initiation we overheard in the night. When we compliment him upon his vigorous health, he suggests that it may be due to the fact that he eats a meal of delicious oysters every night at eleven o'clock.

John takes us first half a mile away through the green fields back of the hotel, up to a shelf or natural terrace projecting from the steep hill-side that walls in the valley. Here we find ourselves among the white marble slabs of a cemetery; and John points out the graves where the German forefathers of the hamlet sleep. He tells us that some of the Palatines came across the country from the Hudson in 1710 and discovered this beautiful valley, and in 1713 they came here and settled. Then he traces the history of monumental art in the valley, pointing out the old gray limestone cemetery slabs of ancient date with their queer carv-

to be true. John points triumphantly to the scratches in the rock, and his eloquence is renewed with tenfold fervor. He overwhelms our doubts, and we are convinced.

Then he calls attention to the features of the valley as it now exists. Across upon the other side we discern terraces which he tells us are graperies. The view, he assures us, is somewhat like what may be seen along the Rhine or in Switzerland. He has never been to those distant places, but travelers have declared to him that in his native valley he has in miniature the scenery of the world. He is satisfied with this, and has no desire to leave his home, until his friends shall bear him to his last rest beneath the cedars and the arbor vitæ upon the hill-side.

Returning toward the hotel, we pass near the present church edifice, built in 1776. The date is seen in huge iron figures upon the tower. John tells us that the stones that were the foundation of the church first erected by the settlers were taken out and brought down and used for the foundation of this modern

tlers. This vane is of iron, and in the form of a crowing cock, with magnificent flowing tail-feathers. John assures us that this cock crowed for many years upon the banks of the Rhine before the Palatines brought it with them to Schoharie.

While we are looking, the court-house bell surprises us, and we hasten away. Reaching the court-room, we find the crowd even denser than on the previous day. A little formal business is first transacted. A sly glance reveals that the Associate Justice has been frightened into a paper collar, but resists other innovations. He is making his stand upon the boots: they remain unblackened and brown and rusty.

The formal matters having been disposed of, the breach of promise case is taken up. The defendant is a stout, honest-faced countryman. His lawyer is the attorney from the city. It seems that the affair occurred years ago, when the defendant was a bachelor. A neighborhood quarrel has now revived it. The sharp points are brought out upon the cross-examination.

"Yes, I do *mean* it," responds the irate spinster.

"How did he say it? What did he say first?" inquires the lawyer.

"Why, the first time when he went away he asked me to remember him in my prayers; and I told him I would."

"Did you do it?" demands the lawyer, interrupting.

"Certainly I did," says the witness, "and I always have. And the next time he came we were in the parlor, and he said, 'Sallie, will you have me?' and he took his hand into mine, and I said, 'Yes; ' and he said he hoped I would never be sorry, and I said I never would if he did as he agreed to."

"Did he squeeze your hand?" asks the counsel.

"Not enough to hurt it, I guess," responds the maiden snappishly.

"Did he press your hand in a manner that indicated peculiar affection for yourself?" inquires the Judge, with impressive blandness and evident relish.

is, a sentiment of especial and endearing regard for you, — as he caressingly pressed your hand ? ”

“ Yes, sir,” replies the lady softly, dropping her eyelids as she meets the keen, searching gaze of his Honor.

“ Where did he kiss you ? — on your cheek or your lips ? ” now resumes her tormentor.

Sallie thinks she is badgered, and remains silent.

“ Please tell us where he kissed you, Miss Sallie,” says the Judge kindly.

“ It was on my lips, sir,” says the lady, in a very low voice, to the Judge.

“ She says it was on her lips,” announces the Judge, with an air of great satisfaction, as he turns to his papers and makes a note of the fact.

“ Now, perhaps you will tell me how many times he kissed you,” says the tormentor.

“ He kissed me once, and that is enough for you to know,” responds the indignant woman.

“ When was that ? ” continues the interrogator.

“I did not come here to be insulted,” retorts the jilted female angrily; and she flounces off the witness-stand, to the great amusement of the spectators.

After further proceedings it comes to John’s turn to tell his side of the story. He “swears” with the same energetic force with which he is accustomed to wield the sledge-hammer in the shop. He declares, with a whack of his great fist upon his knee, that he never did promise to marry Sallie, — no, never, so help him his Maker, he never did! He admits that he was introduced to her by friends when he was looking for a wife, and that he called upon her twice, as she says.

“And did you,” says the Judge, with a slow, delicious utterance of every syllable, “did you at any time press her hand caressingly in an affectionate and endearing manner, or indicate feelings of peculiar interest or attachment?”

“No, your Honor, I did not,” says John. “I looked her over by lamplight and then by daylight, and I see it did n’t take; and I said as much to the folks as introduced me. She

"And how far was it?" says the counsel.

"Better than four mile," replies the witness. "As I was sayin', I walked over there, and she was not there. I found her father there, and talked to him awhile, and then went home. I saw Sallie the next week, at the store, and I told her I had my mind made up not to give up my bachelorship quite yet, and I did not want to marry her. She cried, and I told her not to feel bad, and I left her; and she and I never spoke no more."

The Judge, in charging the jury, says, "And although, gentlemen, this proceeding, even upon the plaintiff's own statement, is not as warm and ardent as our experience might lead us to expect, and although there is a frigidity about it which does not perhaps fully satisfy the mind, yet, if you believe this man did gently press this woman's hand in a manner denoting and intended to denote peculiar affection, and if they did mutually promise marriage, that promise is binding."

As the jury go out, John's counsel smilingly remarks that the Court evidently regards this

10. THE COURT IN SESSION.
he buries his face between his knees. The sudden joy and relief is too much for him. His great shoulders heave and sway in his efforts to repress his sobs. The counsel laugh and jog him and tell him to "hold up," they want to speak to him.

John rises to his feet with a great swing and a jerk designed to throw his long hair back from his red, excited face, which is seen to be all wet with tears, and, grabbing his hat, he rushes from the court-room.

Ten minutes later, the counsel find him and his family at the hotel where they have put up, crying and laughing and hugging each other in the excess of their great joy. The avalanche of an angry woman's vengeance, which has threatened them for a year past in the shape of this lawsuit, can never crush them now, and they look into a future without a cloud.

A day later, the court adjourns *sine die*. The crowd of people in wagons and on foot make their way out of town, and the hamlet seems almost deserted. The carriage and the grays are brought to the door, and we prepare



AN ADIRONDACK HOME.

FAR off, crossing the vast, dim valley below us, the St. Lawrence River is seen, — a thread of silver creeping through the verdure to the sea.

We are at an Adirondack homestead, where I spend a part of every summer. It is a remote place among the mountains, and just in the edge of the great woods. My brother Edward now resides here.

In the bottom of a deep, wooded valley, through which flows our little river, a quarter of a mile back of the house, is the saw-mill. We (three brothers) built it when we were boys. We still treasure a large flat bottle filled with sawdust, — the first cut by the saw, when the mill was started, more than twenty years ago. In order to comprehend the sentiment involved in this sawdust, it is impor-

telegraph to a single wire and the stations to mere sheds of rough boards, Salsify could not forbear expressions of contempt. He also told me very frankly that the people were the most disagreeable he had ever seen. He said they were afraid to talk. When I explained to him that quiet living in solitary places induced habits of taciturnity and reserve, he insisted that it was not reserve, but sulkiness.

The morning after our arrival, when I endeavored to impress Salsify with a sense of the grandeur of the landscape that stretches away to a dim horizon in Canada, he conceded all I claimed for it, but was evidently much more interested in a couple of guinea-fowls that were rambling about the door-yard with the chickens and turkeys. We were informed that these "guineas" kept the hawks off. The harsh clangor of their voices was supposed to have this effect. But Salsify was chiefly interested in the fact that the guineas were great fighters. He remarked that their heads were more like snakes' heads than like the heads of other fowls. When, two days after

and most absurd that ever afflicted a quadruped. He has battled with it for many years. The bitterness of these contests has sunk deep into his mentality, and is now apparent in his long, melancholy visage. His enemy is not a burglar or another dog: it is simply and vaguely the thunder of the heavens. Plato's battles with the thunder-storms are widely known and often talked of in the neighborhood. As we came here in the heart of the summer, I have had opportunity to see Plato in full operation.

As the first low muttering of a storm is heard, Plato's warm brown eyes, which I have perhaps just then caressed into a peaceful and affectionate expression, darken and contract, the wrinkles on his face deepen, his long, slim tail suddenly becomes a crow-bar, and, jerking away from me and throwing up his head, his mouth opens, and the long, moaning, bell-like note peculiar to his race echoes through the clearing. If he happens to be in the house, it makes no difference: his voice cannot be suppressed. The only relief is to get him out as

clear to him that his enemies are coming in all directions. He turns this way and that to repel and pursue them. The dog's ambition is apparently to catch always the last thunder-bolt before it has time to leave the clearing. In this mad pursuit he charges around the house and across the premises in all directions in a howling frenzy of excitement. As the deluge comes down, Plato may be dimly seen through the sheets of water flitting past, drawing himself out into a blue line in his efforts to increase his speed sufficiently to overtake that last thunder-bolt. As the bolts come thicker and faster, Plato's howl is sometimes broken short off, ending with a squeak, as he twists himself to a sharp angle, leaving the old and turning to pursue the new arrival. In the midst of such terrors his voice also becomes "choky," and seems almost articulate in its expression, this effect being due doubtless to his feelings and to the fact that his mouth is likely to be partly filled with rain-water.

Frequently it becomes evident that Plato is, in his own opinion, getting the worst of it. The

to continue, as in previous years, with forces unabated, to the close of the summer campaign.

One of Plato's peculiarities is that his intelligence resides chiefly in his nose. He refuses to accept the testimony of his eyes unsupported by his more trustworthy nasal organ. He has even failed to recognize his master at sight; and usually on meeting any of the family away from home he circles around to the leeward and takes a sniff before making his approaches.

Plato is at his best when hunting the foxes which abound in the neighborhood. He never hunts them alone, but always in company with his cousin Hero, who belongs upon an adjoining farm. The exploits of the two dogs are noteworthy. The pair, when allowed to go at large, are well-mated vagabonds. If not prevented, they would do nothing but hunt foxes all the year round, — except, of course, at such times as Plato is engaged in his thunder-storm business. To prevent an extensive waste of dog-power, Hero is, as a rule, kept chained at home. Plato, however, is at liberty to visit

100 MR. HENRIKSEN'S HOME.

or winter, are not very shy. Last autumn the first fox started in this manner seemed almost to have been caught napping, for Plato was close upon his heels. As they were seen crossing the wide, open stretch of meadow, it seemed inevitable that Plato, who is a very fast dog, would catch the game ; but the fox was a very cunning animal and a great dodger. As we looked upon the race from the piazza, it was jump and dodge and squirm and twist and zig-zag all across the field, until at last Reynard reached a rail-fence at the boundary. Here the fox had a trick which gave him an advantage. He went through the fence, and the dog went through after him. Then the fox dodged back again to the other side of the fence, and so continued threading the fence back and forth like a needle, and the dog, trying to follow with his greater bulk, was embarrassed and confused. The fox, skittering along the line of fence in this alternate manner, secured a respectable start, and the dog was left behind to pick up the track and follow the scent in the usual way, which he did with eager yelps and howlings.

chasing on and baying hour after hour, until they have worn out the day, and perhaps the night, in the pursuit.

Sometimes the fox, tired of the chase, takes to his hole. The men, hearing the baying at a fixed point, know what has happened. Occasionally they go to the assistance of the dogs. Then, with a long withe or pole, cut from the woods, they explore to find the direction of the hole, and, cutting down from above, reach the fox in his home. In unearthing the fox there is usually a tussle. Plato, in an agony of excitement, perceiving by his exquisite sense of smell that the fox is just in advance of the shovels, in spite of all prohibitions dives in among the implements, crams his long, slim head into the hole, and a moment later, with a smothered yell, pulls backward. What has happened? The little hunted fugitive has turned upon his pursuer and has planted his small, sharp, foxy teeth in the most sensitive part of that wonderful nose which is Plato's grandest characteristic. Plato continues to pull and yell, and the fox, finally, rather than

The tenacity and endurance of the hounds are best seen when they are left wholly to themselves in their hunting, as they often are for weeks together. They will be absent from home upon one of their "hunting sprees" for perhaps thirty-six hours, and engaged during all that time in the chase, pursuing by night as well as by day. Plato returning from such a dissipation is a sight to see. He went away full-fleshed and sleek; he returns a mere sack of bones, so terrific have been the excitement and exertion. If it is cold and wet, as it is apt to be in this mountain region in autumn, he is permitted to come into the kitchen and lie down behind the stove with the cat. For a season he is merely sluggish clay, sleeping constantly, or waking only to eat voraciously or to avoid the broom of the housewife. After about three days he is recuperated, and starts off again, fresh as ever, to meet his cousin Hero, doubtless by appointment, and the pair set out for another episode in their wild career. Such a life would speedily destroy any animal organization less enduring than that of the hound.

Salsify says, generally "fetches him." Plato rises and glances upward at us sheepishly, as if he would say, "What does she want with me? I despise this nonsense;" and then he puts his long nose down against Miss Puss and gently pushes her off the piazza on to the grass. Then Plato returns and sits gravely down by us upon his haunches with a very dignified air, as if he had performed an important family duty. Miss Puss endures this cheerfully. She is evidently a little afraid to trifle with her friend, and quite willing to be treated by him as an inferior if she can retain his good opinion. It is quite clear, also, that Plato is a little ashamed of the sentimentality of their friendship. It is asserted that upon one occasion when Miss Sylvia was unusually familiar Plato went so far as to take her in his mouth and drop her into a tub of rain-water which stands just at the corner of the house; but, upon cross-examination, the evidence of this did not seem to me sufficient. There can be no doubt, however, that Plato does not like publicly to own his friendship for the cat. He

on the piazza at the house with the family and the neighbors in the cool of the day, and talk of our little camp where we picnic, and of farming, and hunting, and other topics, there is greater freedom and enjoyment than I have known anywhere else, except, perhaps, among the girls and boys at a district school. The families of the neighborhood seem to constitute only one large family. They run in and out and about each other's houses as if they were common property. Salsify is beginning to enjoy this free life, and says he never found so much pleasure in any other. The freedom of the place has extended to our camp, rendering the long talks which Salsify and I enjoy there free and confidential. My own burden — the knowledge that life is so far advanced with me and I have accomplished so little — has been placed frankly before my office-boy during the days we have spent together in the leafy solitude of the woods lying on the bank of the river. We have also read a few books together ; but there is a difference in our tastes which works against success in this direction :

elsewhere Salsify has been called "a good boy." No other appellation could so humiliate or depress him. "I am no saint," he pleads indignantly, as he discourses of his grievance in our camp. And then he proceeds to lay before me the lies he has told, the battles he has fought, and the small thefts he has committed. I discover also that he has a list of semi-profane words, which he explodes like fire-crackers in his vehement talk. In reply to Salsify I am compelled to admit that, taking all the sins together which he has committed since his babyhood, the array is perhaps sufficient to constitute a barrier against goodness. But I do not tell him that which I cannot help thinking, — that, with his extremely impulsive nature, sweet disposition, and honesty of purpose, he is not likely wholly to escape the imputation which he so much dreads.

Salsify's criticism of those who have been his instructors at school is interesting. "There is Miss Williams," he exclaims patronizingly, "who might be a real nice girl, but she is a slave to duty, and has no more idea of freedom or a good time than a machine."

over on moonlight nights. The fur of the Alaska sapsle in the market might not seem as sweet by another name. Therefore there is, as a convenient fiction, such an animal as the Alaska sapsle, and his fur is very fine, and happens now to be in fashion.

For some months in autumn and winter the Alaska-sapsle-man pursues his lucrative calling. He lives a hermit-life, and is not likely to be troubled with visitors. At the termination of his exile he deodorizes himself, his dog, and his peltry, manages to get into a new suit of clothes at some intermediate point, and returns to his fellow-beings.

I have not stated hitherto the fact that our little camp and general location are in and near a belt of woods which connects (with some slight breaks caused by clearings) the Adirondack forest with the forests of Canada. More or less deer are seen every season passing over this territory or run-way in their journeyings, and now and then a bear is discovered along the same line. These are often pursued and killed. Sometimes the hunt and capture

the piazza, the first week after our arrival, was extreme. Moved by curiosity and the stories, he naturally desired to explore, and resolved, among other things, to attend church at the Corners, where that bear was killed on the green. On Sunday morning, before I was aware of it, he had arrayed himself and had gone alone to the place. He returned early in the afternoon, and explained to me that the church-services did not amount to anything, and that he had never been so stared at in all his life before. He professed, however, not to care for the staring, and said he could look any man, woman, or child of them all, including the preacher, out of countenance in ten seconds.

I did not venture at the time to tell Salsify why he had attracted so much attention. I enlightened him gradually in the course of the week, as I thought he could bear it. When I had told him all, he was, to my surprise, not abashed, but pleased, and gloried in the sensation he had created. The fact was, he had decked himself out in what he supposed to be

some modifications) it was permitted. I noticed that he sat during the entire service in a belligerent attitude, breathing defiance. The religious exercises, simple and majestic in their homely setting, entirely failed to reach down to the current of his youthful life. His imaginary contest with the worshipers entirely absorbed him.

Another of Salsify's explorations consisted in seeing how near he could get to the hut of the Alaska-saple-man. With this object in view, he wandered off alone, intending to make his way through the woods in a direct line to the locality. He was absent all day, and returned from "somewhere down toward Canada," having gone astray. Coming out on a road, he paid a man who knew the country a dollar and a half to bring him home, where he arrived after nightfall.

Perhaps it was this experience on the part of Salsify that led him and all of us to take so deep an interest in the boy who was lost near Blue Mountain. Blue Mountain is about twenty miles from where we are located. The

Sam Curley. Mr. Curley said there was a new joke down where he lived. Tom Powell had sold a cow to Bill Worden for a six-year-old animal, when she was no such thing. The cow had only one horn. Bill looked at his purchase and noticed that there were thirteen wrinkles on her horn. One wrinkle comes every year: so that it appeared to him the cow must be thirteen years old. He felt bad about it, and spoke to Tom, charging that Tom had misrepresented the age of the animal. Tom replied indignantly, asking Bill if he really was such a numskull and did not know anything. "Why," said Tom, "the animal has but one horn, and of course both wrinkles come on one horn." Bill had to accept the explanation.

About an hour before noon we reached the huckleberry-plains. We found a dozen little tents clustered together, and there were twenty or thirty teams and nearly a hundred people. It was on the bank of the St. Regis River. There was a fine view of the mountain, and miles and miles of woods stretching away in every direction.

to their tent, there was some discussion in regard to the probability of the boy being found alive. The red-haired man thought it would be possible. This man seemed to be an excitable individual. He declared that he would not sleep a wink that night, because he would be thinking all the while about Andrew.

The two men who had brought the intelligence said the surveyors had sent out word that the boy would very likely get to the bank of the river in his wandering, and they thought if he did he would keep along by the side of it. They wished, therefore, that some of the men would take a boat and go up the St. Regis River a dozen miles or more, searching and calling as they went. They thought it possible that the boy might be found in that way.

By midnight all had been said that could well be suggested, and the company around the fires dropped away to the tents to sleep. The next day was Sunday. It still remained clear and bright weather. The day was spent in various ways by the people, but the majority remained quietly at the camps. Divine service

was, and came back. When asked if he had heard the guns fired by the various parties that went into the woods the morning after he disappeared, he said he did, but they confused him. He would hear firing in one direction and would go toward it, after which there would be firing in another direction and he would turn toward that, and so it "mixed him all up." He had fired his gun once in reply, but, having lost his box of percussion-caps, could fire no more.

Edward and Salsify and I started on our return to the farm-house the next morning. There was an incident that amused us just as we were starting. Mr. Pinkham came to the plains to pick huckleberries, provided with a bundle of slips of paper, and on each slip was written, "Tobias Pinkham, — Lost!" He was going to tack these notices to the trees as he traveled, if he got lost, and he had a paper of small tacks in his pocket for that purpose. He agreed with some hunters that in case he should be missing they would search for him, looking out sharp for the notices. It was a

